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SERMONS, OUTLINES AND ILLUSTRATIONS
FOR SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS

Whitsunday

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

FOR THE EPISTLE . .	ACTS II. 1-11.
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SECOND EVENING LESSON .	GAL. V. 16—END; OR ACTS XVIII. 24 TO XIX. 21.

I. COMPLETE SERMONS

The Christian Church.

They put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. S. MATT. IX. 17.

ON Whitsunday the Christian Church keeps her birthday. As on this day she became what she essentially is, the spiritual society, the home of the spiritual religion, she received the Spirit.

The spiritual religion. What is meant by this term? In religious discussions among us the term is always being used and yet not very often defined. In the ordinary English mind the term 'spiritual' is supposed to be opposed to the 'material,' and so to anything tangible, visible, definite: or 'spiritual' is opposed to what is 'literal' in interpretation—it is metaphorical, and so again indefinite.

Thus external ordinances because they are external, rules that are definite because they are definite, truths that are exactly stated because they are exactly stated, are more or less commonly supposed to be unspiritual and contrary to the character of the spiritual religion.

Now this state of mind is in fact due to a fundamental mistake which a little steady thinking ought to uproot.

To consider the question as a matter of language, 'spiritual' in the New Testament is never, in fact, opposed to what is material or visible, but only to what is carnal—to that in which the higher part of our nature is dragged at the heels of the lower. Thus the birth of Isaac is spiritual—'he was born,' S. Paul says, 'after the spirit'; while the birth of Ishmael is carnal 'after the flesh,' not because the birth of Isaac was one whit less visible or material than the birth of Ishmael, but because it came about so as to express a spiritual and divine purpose, and not as the outcome of mere physical passion. Or, again, what is spiritual may be opposed to what is formal—to an act, that is, which is external only and has no moral meaning behind it. So S. Paul speaks of circumcision which is 'in the letter,' that is in external form only, and not 'in the spirit,' as having nothing moral corresponding to it; but, on the other hand, the supremely spiritual act, the act of Christ when 'in His eternal spirit He offered Himself without spot to God,' gains its meaning through its being visible and enacted in the flesh—'it was an offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all.' Once again there is one passage where 'spiritually' means metaphorically or allegorically in the matter of interpretation, the passage in the Apocalypse in which the city is spoken of, which 'spiritually' is called Sodom or Egypt, where it is implied that these sinful cities have a mystical meaning, because their sinfulness represented a principle wider than themselves. But this use of the word 'spiritually' is unique in the New Testament, and in itself it only implies that certain definite outward objects and incidents enshrine eternal principles.

Positively, then, what does the New Testament language teach us to understand by the spiritual religion, as opposed to what is carnal or formal or unreal? The central idea of the spirit is that of life; the Christian Church is spiritual, because in a unique sense she, as on this day, received the communication of Divine Life, in its threefold form of power, of knowledge, and of love. The spirit is power: as for the 'letter'—the written laws of the Old Covenant—it could effect nothing. It could inform the conscience or terrify it, but it could not strengthen the will and make it effective for good; but the Spirit gave life, so that the 'requirements of the law are fulfilled in us who walk after the Spirit.' Again, the Spirit is knowledge: as for the ritual ordinances of the old law they were dumb forms; they carried with them little information, or such information as witnessed to their own inadequacy, but the Spirit fulfils the heart of the Christian with a joyful intelligence of the mind and character of God, a happy insight into the meaning of all he is required to do. Once more, the

Spirit is love: as for the old law, it laid injunctions upon men, which had to be obeyed, simply as they were enjoined, with nothing more than the obedience of slaves; but the men of the New Covenant have received the Spirit of God, and, one spirit with Him, they act in conscious correspondence with His redemptive purpose, and serve in the glad co-operation of loving sons.

Power; intelligence; love—power from God, intelligence of God and His purposes, love to God in Himself and in His creatures—these make up the content of spirituality. But power, intelligence, love, as they are represented in human beings, beings of body and of soul, beings linked to one another in outward fellowship, can be in no sort of opposition to the world of matter and form. So holy is this human flesh, this thing of matter and form, that the Son of God has taken it for ever into His own Person, and glorified it in the Godhead. Acts the most spiritual, then, like the sacrifice of Jesus, are not one whit less spiritual because they are external; truth, the more spiritually it is known, is so known as to be expressed the more exactly; life, the more spiritual it is, becomes the more definite in purpose and concrete in result. The acceptable worship, the worship 'in spirit and in truth,' is as much an external worship as that supreme worship which the Son of Man offered to the Father in the sacrifice of Calvary, or offers still at the glory of the right hand; but it is worship which enlists all the full energy of will and intelligence and love.

The Christian Church had very early in her career an opportunity of showing that she did not conceive spirituality to be in any antagonism at all to external religion. She came out in her earliest history into a philosophical atmosphere impregnated with what is called 'dualism'—that is, the assertion of the antagonism of the flesh and the spirit. Greek philosophy in its youth, in spite of its intense realisation of the beauty of outward form, never succeeded in shaking off this delusion: upon its old age it returned with powerful reinforcements and brought it into captivity. The reinforcements lay in that wave of Oriental influence which in the early centuries of our era flooded our Western world. All the then prevalent sects of Gnosticism and Manichæism, all the forms of philosophical dualism, had this in common: they thought of evil as lying, more or less completely, in the material world, in the flesh; they thought of the material world as too low, too vile, to be in direct contact with God or the direct work of His hand; they thought that true religion lay not in the consecration of material and common things, but in getting aloof from them and separate from them. To get away from the body was to get near to God, and the highest religious state was that rapt ecstasy in which the soul, having become unconscious of all external surroundings and independent of all bodily affinities, could

contemplate God. The Church's primary and great conflict was with this temper of mind as represented in Gnosticism. There is, I believe, no later struggle in which her true principles emerge so clearly, as certainly there was none in which she had to struggle so hard for very life. The opposing principles came to the front in a fourfold theory.

I. That the material world could not be directly the handiwork of the good God, the Father of Jesus Christ.

II. That God could not actually by Incarnation have taken unto Himself the human flesh and been born and suffered and died.

III. That the Old Testament, as earthly and sense-bound, could not be the work of the same God as the New.

IV. That the acceptance in faith of a definite creed and definite ordinances and definite Scriptures might be good enough for the vulgar and ordinary Christian, but the inner circle of the perfect and the illuminated, the spiritual men, soared above those restrictions and were independent of them.

To these positions the Christian Church in its different parts returns a blank negative.

I. The whole world, they said, material and spiritual, is of one creation: it is rebel wills that are the source of moral evil, not material nature, which is God's work, and rightly used is very good.

II. So good is material nature, that God has really entered into it and assumed for ever the human flesh.

III. The Old Testament is of one piece with the New, and is to be interpreted on that principle of gradual development which is a conspicuous law of the divine working, and by which the spiritual destiny of the universe gradually appears.

IV. The outward ordinances (the fixed tradition and Scriptures, the ministry, Sacraments, and discipline of the Church) are part of her essence and belong to her glory. They are her glory. You in the pagan world, or you who borrow the pagan principle, may have one sort of religion for the intellectual and another for the simple. But it is the glory of our religion that she puts them on the same basis; declares every man susceptible of spiritual perfection, and holds them altogether from birth to death—high and low, rich and poor, one with another.

Life in God, knowledge of God, communion with God, may be to the pagan only the ultimate goal of the rapt ecstatic, or the privilege of a philosophic self-abstraction from the things of sense, possible to a very few. We say to all men, 'Take it as the gift of God, made tangible and visible in common ordinances; the submitting to be taught a creed, the reception of a washing of water and a laying on

of hands; the common partaking of bread and wine, these are simple unostentatious acts, which all are capable of, which all can approach. But through these common things of the common world our God, who took, and wears, our common flesh, still communicates His hidden essence.'

This was her boast; and these sacramental principles of the Church (we are bound to note) antedated long the development of ritual. Elaborate ritual is to the Catholic Churchman, who knows his principles, never more than a matter of variable expediency. At least, in early days, a Christian like Tertullian was not less sacramental for being very puritanical. 'People are scandalised,' he says, 'by the simplicity of our Sacraments: they contrast the commonness of the means with the greatness of the gift promised. The heathen rites, on the other hand, gain imposingness by pomp. But with us a man descends into the water, and a few words are spoken, and he is washed, and there is no apparatus or elaboration; and for this very reason it seems improbable that the gift of eternal life should have been conveyed. But what a miserable incredulity,' cries Tertullian, 'have we here, which denies to God His proper attributes, simplicity and power!'

The Church, then, is the home of the spiritual religion, because she, in special and pre-eminent sense, is endowed with the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of power and intelligence and love. And the manifold gifts of this Spirit are distributed in such a way as befits the 'household of God,' in which men are to be 'fed with their portion of meat in due season.' Each stage of life has its special need: each special need has its appropriate gift, and the appropriate gift has its ordained channel: all is ordered and simple as befits a household of security and peace. The beginning of the new life, which Christianity perpetuates from Christ, lies in that regenerating act of God upon the soul, in which, by the Holy Spirit's action, it is united to Christ and admitted into the fellowship of His holy body; and this regenerating act is ministered through an outward channel which is symbolical and also more, the ordinance of washing, which symbolises and also conveys the cleansing gift of the new life. And next to birth comes strengthening. The strength of the Christian, as also his consecration to share in the priesthood and royalty of Christ, lies in the inward presence of the Holy Ghost, and this gift of the Holy Ghost is communicated since Apostolic days by the laying on of hands. And the life imparted must be nourished: and again the perpetual nourishing of the new life out of the fulness of the Christ is effected through the operation of the Holy Ghost upon the simple symbolical elements of bread and wine, mingling the heavenly with the earthly things.

It is by the same principle that the general human instinct which

is recognised in Christian marriage has its benediction in a special ordinance giving definiteness and sanctity to the mutual engagements of man and wife. So also that original distinction in the Christian society of the pastor and the flock is emphasised by a special ordination which solemnly conveys in outward form the consecrating and empowering of the man to his share in the Apostolic ministry; and through the outward form is pledged the accompaniment of the inward qualifying gift. Once more, the scandalous sin which outrages the Christian community, or the secret sin, which burdens the troubled and perplexed conscience, has its appropriate remedy in the special discipline of penitence, which, first public and then private, at one time voluntary, at another compulsory, at one time occasional, at another normal, has ever remained a permanent fact of the Church tradition, an outward ceremony of penitence and restoration, which is accompanied by a spiritual and heavenly acquittal, and is a part of that rich storage of graces with which the Church encompasses our varying needs, and leads us on from the font where she has baptized us to the death-bed where she still with holy rites ushers us into the unseen world. The Church is the home of the Spirit, whose manifold gifts are ordered and distributed in correspondence with our advancing needs: as she is also the home of a definite disclosure of God, who has communicated Himself to man, and revealed Himself in the Person of His Son.

This idea of the Church, as one states it, seems most credible, most natural. The strength of its appeal to tradition, to the earliest traditions of many Churches, is undoubted. Its sanction in the language of the New Testament is hardly more open to question; while, once again, it is in conspicuous agreement with the needs of men, and with what one may call the principle of the Incarnation: the dignity which the Incarnation gives to material things. But there is no idea so true as not to admit of being abused. And, in fact, this Church idea has so degenerated at times into formalism or materialism or tyranny as to account for, if not wholly to justify, reactions—reactions which are one-sided. It is only so that it could have come about, as conspicuously in our own country, that S. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith could be put into opposition to what is also S. Paul's own doctrine of Church and Sacraments, and identified with a party of its own; while it has been left to another less defined part to reiterate that all religion has after all no other end or test than the production of good living. What is it but a miserable and foolish one-sidedness that can ever have put these truths into antagonism one to another? For S. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, what is it? It means that what justifies a man or puts him into a relation of acceptance with God is not anything material, like

circumcision, or anything external, like circumcision, or any methodical observance of a prescribed rule, like the Jewish law, but something more true to man's fundamental dependence upon God: it is the surrender of man's being into the hand of God, considered as making in Christ the simple offer of His love. Wearied with his efforts to justify himself, wearied with his own false independence, man, at last, within or without the discipline of the Jewish law, learns to find his true peace in surrendering at discretion to God, and simply accepting the offer of His love. This is justifying faith: it establishes the right relation of the soul to God. But it is the beginning, not the end, of that relation. The man grows 'from faith to faith,' or (again in S. Paul's words) he 'has access by faith into that grace wherein' for the future 'he stands.' That is, the believing soul, whose simple surrender to God's promises has removed all the obstacles to his justification, is baptized in the 'bath of regeneration,' baptized into Christ. He receives the Spirit, he enters into the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. In this new position the function of his faith is changed. Intellectually it dwells upon the person of the Redeemer and passes from faith into knowledge; morally it keeps hold of God who has apprehended it, and also it becomes a perpetual correspondence with the movements of the Spirit whom it has received—a perpetual assimilation, manducation, appropriation of spiritual gifts. But all this doctrine of faith is in no kind of antagonism to the doctrine of the Church and the Sacraments rightly understood. Everywhere life and growth consists in an appropriation by an organism of what is supplied to it from without. This holds good in the spiritual life. The Church is, in recent language, the environment of the soul. The Sacraments constitute the external supply. The supply is real. The Sacramental gifts are valid through the Spirit's action without any effort on our part. They are God's gifts simply. But their whole effect on us depends on the degree of assimilative and appropriative effort—the degree of faith—which we exercise. According to our faith is it done to us. This was the law of Christ's physical healings: the instrument of healing was the power or virtue which went out from His sacred Person. But the effect in each case was dependent on the response of faith. Where there was no faith there was no healing. According to their faith it was done to men. Their faith it was that made them whole. So it is with our Lord's work of spiritual recreation now that he is at the right hand of God. The restorative power, of which His Sacraments are the ordained channels, depends for its efficacy in each case (not for its reality, I say, but for its effect) on the response of faith. Nor is it that the gift from without is God's, and the response from within simply our own act. Nay!

within us and without us is the Spirit's action. From without He comes to us with gifts of grace, in all the organised system of His Church: He works within to quicken our coldness and to overcome our wilfulness, till we exhibit the free and eager response of a converted heart to the offer of God. And all the external supply of grace, and all the inner response of faith, is but a means to that which is the only end of all religion, the renewal of the soul, of the whole man, into the image of Him who created it. Need we be for ever in reactions? Let us who believe profoundly in the Sacraments see to it that we never let them, as far as lies in us, be spoken of, or treated, or used as charms. Let us give no countenance, for instance, to any use of baptism such as would allow children to be baptized where there is no fair prospect of their being brought up to understand the meaning of their Christian vocation—a use, I believe, utterly contrary to fundamental Christian principles. Let us see to it that on our side there is no failure to preach the necessity of the faith which alone justifies, and of the converted will. Let us see to it that we never allow in our thoughts or our language any other measure of ecclesiastical success than the promotion of holiness, the promotion of goodness, in the actual lives of men. Let us see to it we are not one-sided; and then we may have better hopes of reunion among ourselves in our own Church of England. For to S. Paul the three aspects of truth which, more or less roughly, have been identified with three parties in our Church, are not opposites but correlatives. Three times he states the essence of the true religion in antithesis to the externalism of the Judaists, and three times in different terms. 'Circumcision,' he cries three times over, 'is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but . . . faith working by love.' Do you ask what is the essence of true religion viewed as the response of man to God? It is operative faith. And again . . . 'the keeping of the commandments of God.' Do you ask what is true religion considered in its end and fruit? It is actual conformity of our lives to the divine requirements. But once again . . . 'a new creature.' Do you ask what is the essence of true religion considered from the side of God? It is that new creative act, the new creative act of grace, which in all its stages finds its expression in the Church and its instruments in the Sacraments. The system of grace, the response of faith, the result in obedience, these are not opposites, they are the correlatives the one of the other: they are all of the essence of the one spiritual religion.

But it will be said or felt: Yes, it is all very well: this Church theory, the doctrine of Sacraments, is natural and coherent enough—scriptural enough indeed, if you will. But if it comes seriously to believing it, one must ask, is it not in too manifest conflict with facts?

This suggestion of exclusive channels of grace, does it square with facts, with the wide and promiscuous diffusion of spiritual excellence as the record of history and the experience of life present it? Nay! I must have a freer theory. Verily 'the wind bloweth where it listeth' —so is the movements of the free Spirit.

Ah, yes! who could deny it? The Spirit breatheth where He listeth. All life is His in nature and in man. There is no being which lies outside the action of the Eternal Word or His Spirit. Every movement of good in man anywhere is of His breathing. Everywhere, under His inspiration, men are seeking after God, 'if haply they may feel after Him and find Him,' and 'in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness,' feareth and worketh with the help of the Holy Spirit, and in Him is accepted of God. God is not tied to any special channels. There are no such things as exclusive means of grace, means of grace as to which one can say, 'God worketh here, not elsewhere.' But this, after all, is no novel concession. *Deus non obligatur, sacramentis suis*, it was said of old. In all ages thoughtful theologians of all schools have seen that truths like these are involved in the recognition of the fatherhood of God, and His all-rectifying and impartial justice. 'But then, what is it you claim for the Sacraments?' Just what is involved in the idea of 'covenant,' and in the idea of 'the household' of God. The state of covenant carries us into a region beyond that of dim and anxious seeking. It involves a clear disclosure of Himself by God, and, corresponding with this, clear and distinct bestowals and promises of grace. A household is a place where food and nurture is definitely and systematically provided. The joy of Christians is the joy of sons in their father's household, children of the covenant. This is what we claim for Sacraments: not that they are exclusive channels of grace, so that God cannot give except by them the gifts of His love: but that in them only, as elements in His unique covenant, are definite graces pledged and guaranteed by the divine fidelity, so that the faithful Christian transcends the conditions of anxious inquiry, and passes into the region where he faithfully welcomes the assured gift, and fearlessly uses it as indeed given.

And if you press the question further and ask, 'Does not your theory of the security of the covenant involve the conception of "valid Sacraments"—Sacraments, that is, that are only valid when they are celebrated by persons properly ordained in the due transmission of apostolical authority? and does not this theory leave out of account what is, at least in Anglo-Saxon Christianity, an immense and solid part of the working force of Christianity?' I answer, we must hold to this doctrine of Apostolic Succession as bound up with the validity at least of some of the Sacraments. The idea of an ordained steward-

ship of divine gifts is inseparably associated both in idea and in history with the Sacramental system. But what is meant by valid Sacraments? The Greek word βέβαιος, and the Latin word 'validus,' have a definite meaning. The opposite of secure or valid is not non-existent but precarious. The fact that God promises to give in one way does not destroy His power to give in another. It were blasphemy, then, to deny the Spirit's action where we see the Spirit's fruits. It is impossible for one who thinks seriously to ignore or underrate the vast debt which English Christianity owes to nonconformist bodies, to bodies which have fallen quite outside the action of the apostolic ministry. But was there not a cause? If we consider the sins, the scandalous neglect and sluggishness of the Church, is it so very wonderful that God should have worked largely and freely outside the appointed and authorised ministries. We should think it blasphemy, I say, to deny the spiritual experience of the past or the present, even as presented from outside, as to the freedom of the divine action. Still less could we dream of asking any one who is not himself a Churchman to be false to his own experience. But we may ask men to be completely true to the whole of experience. No one part of experience is surely the disastrous present effect of our divisions. No serious Christian can fail to desire most earnestly restored fellowship among Christians. Something is so very wrong at present that we must ask over again, and more and more as circumstances throw back each man upon first principles, What is the divinely intended basis or form of the Christian religion? And the answer is, 'By one Spirit were we all baptized into one body.' The one body—you view it in history, you trace it back to apostolic days—certainly its main lineaments are throughout unmistakable. There have been many partial developments and causes of division, and local beliefs and changing customs and laws. But there is the one tradition of the faith in its central features constant and original: there are the apostolic scriptures, the canon of which gradually takes the place of the living authority of apostolic teachers, as the ultimate court of Christian appeal: there is the system of the Sacraments: there is the apostolically commissioned ministry, with its stewardship of the gifts of truth and grace. These, as parts of the organism of the Spirit, constitute for the whole of the first fifteen centuries the fabric of Christianity. Since the Reformation it is not too much to say that historical inquiry in general, and in our own days, biblical criticism, have rendered it increasingly difficult to tear the Bible out of the structure of the Church, out of the organism of which it forms a part. Nor is it possible to find in original Christianity a 'liberty of prophesying' which left men independent of the visible Church: not in apostolic days, if the Acts of the Apostles and the Pastoral

Epistles and S. Matthew's Gospel are true witnesses: not in later days, unless we do violence to the existing evidence, and make of Montanism the truly conservative movement.

Nay, the more steadily we contemplate Christianity as it comes from the hands of the Apostles, the more certainly we see that the spiritual religion is a religion which has form and body, is a religion made definite in outward acts, is a religion which has external discipline. 'New wine must be put into new bottles,' said our Lord. He did in fact turn His back upon Jewish ordinances. He did discard the old bottles. He did put His new wine—the wine that is still new, the wine of the living Spirit—into new bottles, and both have been preserved.

It is the glory of the English Church that at the Reformation she would not, under the pressure of the new movement, discard the old structure. She neither repudiated the new appeal, nor discarded the old claims. She made mistakes, no doubt. But in the main she approved herself a wise steward, bringing forth out of her treasury things new and old. Therefore does our Church stand in such a unique position of promise among the Churches of Christendom at the present moment.

Now again there are new demands. The demands of new Churches in Africa and India and Japan; the demands of a criticism of fresh thoroughness upon our sacred documents: the demands of the new democracy upon our social institutions. These demands are deep, and in large part legitimate. They cannot be met with merely old answers. But when we are about to throw ourselves into what is new, we who know the serious responsibility which rests upon us as trustees of religion for the after time—we shall take a long steady look into the old; we shall ask what are those elements of Christianity which through all changes have been hitherto permanent. Now the Sacramental system, the visible Church, the ministerial succession, these are more fundamental than the colouring with which at different times our English aristocracy, or Tudor monarchy, or a medieval feudalism have overlaid them. They pass back into what one may call the constitutional fraternity of the early Church. There those institutions were representative in character and fraternal in administration. Let them be so again. Let the hearts of the fathers be towards the children and of the children towards the fathers. 'For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, bond or free, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.'

CANON GORE.

WHITSUNDAY

The Inspiration of Selection.

He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.
S. JOHN xvi. 14.

THIS is the heart of the promise which our Saviour made to His disciples, when, with the feelings of bewilderment and desolation that were natural at the time, they were gathered round Him in the supper-room. The day, they felt, was near when they would no longer see and hear, at any rate, as heretofore, the wise and gracious Friend who had taught, and was teaching, them so much that was best worth knowing. And he did not directly combat or relieve the sad anticipation. Nay, He told them frankly that He was leaving them; that in a little while they would not see Him, because He was going to the Father. But His place, He said, would be taken by another who would not disappoint them; but who would only arrive when He had Himself departed. 'If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you.' And what was this Envoy and Successor to achieve when He did come? He was, no doubt, to change the hearts and minds of those who were outside the sacred fold. He was to 'convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' But He was also to do a yet greater service for the orphaned Church. 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.' . . . 'He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak.' . . . 'He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.'

That this promise would be kept became clear to the Apostles on that solemn occasion, the anniversary of which the Church observes to-day. When the Crucified and risen Lord had ascended into heaven there was an interval of hushed and awful expectation before the promised Comforter came down. And when He came, essential Spirit though He was, He condescendingly came in such guise that the senses of men should apprehend His approach. He came as a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind; His arrival was pourtrayed in tongues like as of fire, which rested upon the Apostles; it was followed by such sudden endowment of a band of Galilean peasants with a gift of speech in various dialects as to astonish a mixed multitude of men who represented almost every race and district between the Tiber and the Euphrates. These were but

outward signs marking the advent of a supernatural power; this was the birthday of the Church of Christ. As our Lord Jesus Christ Himself had been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, so the society, which was to perpetuate among men His mind and His life, sprang from a kindred union between the Eternal Spirit, and a sample—sufficiently poor and unrepresentative it might have seemed, yet still a sample—of our common humanity; and thus the little community, hallowed and invigorated from on high, entered on the career which has already lasted for nearly nineteen centuries, and which will end only with the close of time.

I. We have to consider, first of all, that particular account of the work of the Holy Spirit which our Lord here sets before us, 'He shall glorify Me.' The prediction belongs to that class of His sayings which only admits of moral justification if the speaker is indeed more than man. Natural modesty and good taste, not to speak of distinctively Christian virtues, would make such language impossible in the mouth of any honest and humble man who knew himself to be no more than man, and was conscious of the failure and weakness which in every merely human life must so largely outweigh any solid claims to glory or renown. And our Lord's words cannot be understood to foretell any gradual accumulation and wreathing of titles or doctrines round His person by the devotional or speculative activity of a later time, if, in fact, He had no exact right to that which they implied. No being, whether divine or human, is really glorified by having anything ascribed to him which is not his. The Cæsars were not glorified; they were only made ridiculous, as the wiser of them saw, by official or popular apotheosis. In proportion to a man's perception of the truth of things and the directness and integrity of his moral nature is his dislike of any exaggerated praise. And when we give glory to God we do not and cannot add to that which already belongs to Him; we only make a place in our own hearts, and, it may be, in the hearts of others, for some more adequate apprehension than as yet exists of what He is and what is His due.

When, then, our Lord said that the Spirit of Truth would glorify Him, He meant only that the Spirit of Truth would enable men to do justice to the real character of His life and Person. And there was then, as generally, causes enough at work to make such assistance needful. There were the passions of powerful classes, which made up the great majority of His countrymen, and which were bent on nothing less than casting out His very name as evil. There was the ordinary decay of memory, which would in a few years overtake His most intimate companions. And there was the more perilous activity of fancy, which might substitute, for the preservation and exhibition

of facts, the fictions, or at least the decorative embellishments, of theory or enthusiasm.

A great deal is said about the power and endurance of posthumous influence; but, after all, how little can a man generally reckon on it! It is, in ordinary human experience, out of a man's keeping; it takes its own course, or the course which events prescribe for it. It falls into the hands of some clever adventurer and is manipulated for his own purposes; or it is of a kind to discover unsuspected ingredients, any one of which in its exaggeration may give it a fatally false turn; or it is crowded out of its due place by more vigorous and self-asserting competitors for public favour; or it shows early symptoms of being in a decline, and presently dies of exhaustion. A posthumous influence! It is wedded to a philosophy like that of Socrates, which may presently break up into two or more contending schools of thought; or it is embodied in a political inheritance, like that of Alexander, which may be distributed among three or four successors, whose jealous rivalries are fatal to its permanent integrity; or it is a literary or artistic tradition, which, in the mere act of passing into other keeping, is transformed or dissolved through contact with new and powerful minds. A posthumous influence! It must—alas!—be made over to the care of others; whether they be foes or friends; whether children or disciples. The biography of a modern philosopher has taught us that friends may not always be its safest guardians; Marcus Aurelius lived long enough to discover what weight would be attached to his meditations when the Cæsar Commodus would alone represent the Antonines on the throne of the world; and history has again and again shown how disciples may pay compliments to a departed master, while they set aside his clearest and most emphatic instructions. And thus the preacher might seem in one mood of his thought to express the sombre reality, 'Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart that this also is vanity. For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which is now in the days to come shall all be forgotten. . . . Yea! I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? . . . This, also, is vanity.'

That, therefore, which must strike us in the words of our Lord is His conscious superiority to the fate which may be commonly expected to befall the influence of a man's character or teaching after death. He had put His life and work in such sort of keeping that it would be unaffected by the varying moods of human minds

and the uncalculable contingencies of human circumstances. And how would the promised Guardian of Christ's glory set about His work?

First of all, by exerting a transforming, purifying, invigorating influence upon human characters.

No merely natural account can be given of the change which is observable in the Apostles between the eve of the Crucifixion and the morrow of Pentecost. The perplexed, doubting, timid, half-suspicious, gloomy peasants, who misunderstand their Master's words and shrink from his side in the hour of danger, have been transformed into men conscious of being the trustees of a supernatural creed, and more than willing—aye, joyful—at any moment to attest its truth with their lives. And in the great Apostle, whose experience was so different from that of the eleven, a profound transformation of character, as well as of purpose, is no less observable. As he preached the faith which once he destroyed, men recognised, he says, a Higher Power that had wrought the change, 'they glorified God in me.'

And in after years, as we know from the genuine Acts of the Martyrs, the Holy Spirit gave glory to the unseen Christ, by displaying again and again before the eyes of the heathen the courage, and patience, and meekness, and dignity of His suffering servants. Nor is it otherwise at the present day. There are lines well known to some of you, which describe at least one actual, and probably a not uncommon, experience·

'I saw thee once, and naught discerned
For stranger to admire:
A serious aspect, but it burned
With no unearthly fire.

Again I saw, and I confessed
Thy speech was rare and high;
And yet it vexed my burdened heart,
And scared—I knew not why.

I saw once more, and awestruck gazed
On face and form and air;
God's living glory round thee blazed
A saint—a saint was there.'

And the glory of our Lord was further promoted when the Holy Spirit organised a visible body—the Christian Church. The Church was not an afterthought, founded by men, who, finding that they thought and felt alike, combined to form an association which could enable them the better to work together, and might secure weight and currency for their convictions. The Church already existed as a home of souls on the day of Pentecost. And for a believer to belong

to it was a matter of necessity, not of propriety or choice. And apart from its faith, its life, its perpetual, scarcely observed, but incessant and resistless expansion, nothing is more wonderful in the early ages than its coherence. It is less remarkable that the Church was not crushed to death by relentless persecutions than that she was not tempted to make terms with the pagan Syncretism which was especially in vogue, for instance, in the second and third quarters of the third century. From Elagabalus down to Aurelian a constant series of efforts were made to induce the Church to mingle her creed and life with one or another of the conglomerate forms of decaying paganism. So cleverly were the Sacraments and rites of Christianity reproduced at one period by the priests of Mithra, that S. Augustine, referring to it, could, almost humorously, exclaim, '*Mithra Christianus est.*' But it was all to no purpose. A few Gnostics might yield to the spell. The great Catholic body would have nothing to do with it, though refusal meant a renewal of persecution. The truth was that the business of the Church, informed by the Holy Spirit, was to uphold in undiminished lustre the unshared, unapproachable glory of the Redeemer; and her separate existence witnessed to it in the ratio of the dangers whether of violence or seduction to which she was exposed. The question how she still came to be there could only be answered in the minds of thoughtful men by reference to the unique Person of her Lord. She was there to proclaim His glory.

For this witness of the Church was not that of a voiceless or inert body. She spoke through great saints and writers whose words commanded the attention of the world; she spoke through assemblies which, before the division of East and West, represented, either by delegation or by subsequent consent, the whole of the company to which the promise had been made in the supper-room. Can we fail to see the hand of Providence in this, that before the separations had taken place which suspended the action of the collective Church, every question had been asked and answered that could bear upon the personal glory of the Redeemer; from the truth of His Divinity down to the separate reality of His human will; in those days of eager speculation, and sincere, if not always instructed belief, there was, indeed, many a wave of unhallowed passion surging round the eternal truths at stake; but the informing, presiding, chastening Spirit rode the storm, and not many a thoughtful man, it may be supposed, who begins by believing that Christ's words are true, can trace the action of the Church in the great Conciliar period without feeling himself in the presence of a Power, the law of whose action is revealed in the promise, 'He shall glorify Me.'

Thirdly, and especially, the glorification of the ascended Christ was achieved by the creation of a new sacred literature, the Books of

the Canon of the New Testament. The Church is, indeed, historically older than the New Testament; but the New Testament is the supreme work of the Holy Spirit when glorifying Christ in the Church. Pentecost had not long passed when a group of biographers and letter-writers appeared upon the scene of Christendom, each retaining whatever was characteristic and individual in expression and style, yet so controlled by a unifying and illuminating Power as to combine harmoniously in the setting forth many sides of a single truth. There were, indeed, among the first teachers of the Church minds so divergent by temper and genius, that had all, indeed, depended upon merely human influences, had there been no supernatural bond of unity, they would assuredly have parted into irreconcilable factions. As it is, nothing is more discernible than the controlling and modifying action of God the Holy Spirit in the New Testament writings.

S. Matthew and S. Luke enable us to observe how S. Mark and S. John are only recording differing aspects of a single life; the sermons and discourses reported in the Acts and the First Epistle of S. Peter discover the point of unity between the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians on the one side, and the Epistle of S. James on the other. The Eternal Spirit presides like the leader of a great choir over instruments and voices of the most various compass; and while each contributes something which no other can give, all are duly subordinated to a single will, directed to a supreme end. Look through the Apostolic writings and say whether there be any one motive in them so constant or so powerful as the giving His due place and honour in the thoughts and lives of men to our Lord and Saviour. Each evangelist glorifies one aspect of His life; whether it be His fulfilment of prophecy, or His true humanity, or His redemptive mission and work, or His pre-existent and personal divinity. Each writer of Epistles, or each group of Epistles, sets forth some one truth which shall add to our apprehension of Him; whether it be His example of patience, as in S. Peter; or His lessons of love, as in S. John; or His perfect law of liberty, as in S. James; or His second coming, or His justification of the sinner through faith in His blood, or the transcendent qualities and ordered structure of His mystical body, the Church, as in S. Paul. Whatever else may be divergent in the Apostolic writings, this is the note of their underlying unity of aim; everywhere we trace in them the fulfilment of the promise, 'He shall glorify Me.'

II. This leads us to consider the method employed by the promised Comforter: 'He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.'

Here let us remark that our Lord does not sanction any of those conceptions of the work of the Holy Spirit which treat it as something independent of His own. The Spirit is not the author of a

new dispensation: He perpetuates, explains, expands the teaching and work of Jesus Christ: 'He shall not speak of Himself,' 'He shall take of Mine.' Therefore is He called, in the Apostolic writings, not only the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of Christ; since it is Christ's mind and teaching—ay, and Christ's renewed human nature—which He conveys to the souls of men.

1. If, then, we examine the three great departments of the Holy Spirit's work in the inverse order to that followed just now, let us observe, first, how He takes of the things of Christ and exhibits them to the Church in the New Testament writings. The first five books of the New Testament are biographical or historical. Popular language often assumes that inspiration must always create; but if this were true, there could be no such thing as inspired history. If history be the faithful record of facts, the function of inspiration in history must be limited to the grouping of facts, to the assigning to certain facts a relative prominence, above all, to the selection out of a large number of facts of those facts which illustrate a particular aspect of higher truth. Popular language is wont to speak disparagingly of the copyist or the reporter, but the inspiring Spirit did not by any means abhor the work of the reporter or copyist; His inspiration consisted often enough in guidance to select from a large field those materials which would best illustrate the truth He had in view, and to exhibit them in such wise as to secure this object most effectively.

This faculty of judicious selection is higher and rarer than may be at first supposed. To select wisely out of an embarrassingly large assortment of facts and thoughts requires a combination of penetration and resolve, in order to perceive what is really worth preserving, and to resist the seductions of what is not. Without this gift one writer will bury his true purpose beneath a mass of ill-selected and undigested details; while another will not exhibit details sufficient to give his subject the body and outline which it demands. Sometimes books even of high excellence in other respects, and which have laid the world under such great obligations, as, for instance, the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, may give us reason to regret that their authors have not used more freely certain sources of knowledge which must have been before them, or that they have not touched some matters on which they are discursive with a lighter hand. They may have many merits. But they lack the inspiration of selection.

Now, contrast with this the work of the Holy Spirit in the composition of the Gospels. The supernatural is always haunted by its counterfeit; but the Holy Spirit at once swept aside a mass of legends such as are handed down to us in a somewhat later shape by the New Testament apocryphal literature. Nay, more, He took only

some of the true words and acts of Christ. Christians might well believe that no acts or words of the Son of God during His earthly life could have been without high import of some kind. But they were not all equally useful for the specific purposes of the several evangelists. Each Gospel bears traces of being a selection from a larger assortment of materials; the last says expressly that 'there are many other things which Jesus did,' and which the evangelist had not recorded. Each writer having clearly before him that aspect of the life of Jesus which it was his task to illustrate, whether Messianic, or human, or redemptive, or Divine, traverses with this object the stores of his own memory, or the recitals and reports of other eye-witnesses, and records just so much as is needed for his purpose. Each fulfils the prediction, 'He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.'

The same principle of selection, although it is differently applied, meets us in the Apostolic Epistles. A phrase of Jesus becomes in the hands of an apostle the warrant of a doctrine, which is thus seen to have been always latent in it. The title 'Son of Man,' for instance, re-appears in S. Paul as the 'Second Adam,' the ideal Representative of mankind, whose work is placed in vivid contrast with that of the first father of our race. A word about 'giving His life a ransom for many,' or 'My blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins,' warrants S. Paul and S. John in teaching a propitiatory atonement which wins for sinners pardon and peace. A self-proclamation, not less observable in the Synoptists than in S. John, constantly repeated, and so unlimited in its scope, that if it were not rendered necessary by the facts of the Speaker's consciousness, it would be fatal to those moral qualities which win the love and respect of men, issues in the great passages of S. Paul on the Divinity of Christ, which thus takes its place as the cardinal truth of the Christian creed. These are but samples of the manner in which the Spirit took of the words of Christ and showed their full meaning to the Church in the Apostolic Letters.

Nor was this method of selection from and interpretation of existing materials a new procedure of the Spirit in the Apostolic age. He then did what He had done in ages before the Incarnation. As we say in the Creed, He spake by the prophets; and the prophets in the sense of the Creed are not only members of the particular order which was endowed with a supernatural faculty for interpreting the Divine will, whether at the passing moment or in the more or less remote future, but also the leading rulers, statesmen, and historians who were intrusted with the guidance of the people of Revelation. And the records of their work, as the authors of the historical books tell us, were largely compiled out of documents already in existence. One

historian borrows from another, nay, even one prophet from another, while the Spirit takes now and again from the conglomerate mass of early traditions or records those fragments which had on them the mint-mark of the Eternal Word, and shows them in a new and inspired combination to His ancient people.

And thus we are led to notice a feature common both to the Old and the New Testaments—the startling presence of what may at first sight appear to be foreign elements in the Sacred Book. The early history of Genesis may suggest traditions which had belonged to ancient pagan peoples living in the great Mesopotamian plain; the original text of its early genealogies may lie buried, as a distinguished Oxford scholar had suggested, at Kirjath Sepher, or elsewhere, in brick libraries as yet unexamined; the sacred utensils and buildings of Israel, though consecrated to the worship of the Alone Eternal, may have been shaped more or less upon Egyptian models; its later literature may betray affinities, however we explain them, with Persian forms of thought. Nay, the sacred tongue itself, which was selected to be the vehicle of that earlier Revelation, was not, as was once supposed, unique; it was spoken, like Greek, by neighbouring pagans as well, and, as in the Moabite Stone, it sometimes heralded the praise of pagan deities. These and suchlike facts have been pointed to as showing that the Jewish Revelation did not come from God in any but a merely naturalistic sense. What they really show is that the inspiration which dictated its worship and its sacred records was largely an inspiration of selection.

In like manner, the New Testament presents us with facts supplementary to the old Testament narrative, and often only derived from later Jewish traditions. Such are the prophecy of Enoch; the double call of Abraham from Ur, as from Haran; the hope that sustained Abraham in offering Isaac; the names of the Egyptian magicians; the motive of Moses for leaving the court of Pharaoh and Egypt; the exclamation of Moses at Sinai; the rock that followed the Israelites in the desert; the prayer of Elijah for rain.

Again, S. Paul employs Rabbinical arguments and modes of exegesis; and he quotes heathen authors not to refute, but to endorse, them.

In instances like these, too, the words are fulfilled, 'He shall take of Mine.' For the Speaker in the supper-room is none other than the Eternal Word who is announced in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel. 'His' are not only the sayings and acts of the Incarnate Christ, but whatever is true in the earlier history and thought of our race. Inspired men, like Melchizedek and Balaam and Job, were discoverable beyond the fence of race with which the Divine Wisdom had guarded His earlier Revelation; and, indeed, in all ages,

here and there, in the desert wastes of heathendom, there are to be met with patches of spiritual beauty—flowers which, alike by creation and by culture, are His, who nevertheless ever had in the world only one garden for the human soul, and who did make Israel His people and Jacob His inheritance, before in the last days He spoke by His Son.

One work of the Holy Spirit is to collect these outlying and—may I say it?—less regular creations of the divine mind; it is to disinter the gems that lie hidden beneath the accumulated soil of ages; it is to bring to a focus the rays of light scattered throughout heathendom, and to exhibit their place in the true self-revelation of God.

For if the Holy Spirit thus selects materials from imperfect or false systems, He does not thereby sanction these systems as a whole, or even imply that those portions of them which He does not employ are after the mind of God. The quotation from the Book of Enoch does not prove that the whole of that composition is inspired. The traces of Egyptian influence in the Mosaic ritual and legislation do not imply wholesale approval of the Egyptian theology. The prologue of S. John does not commit the apostle of love to a general sanction of the speculations of Philo. Rabbinical arguments, which may be found here and there in S. Paul's Epistles, do not mean that all other reasonings current in the Rabbinical schools are valid or even legitimate. An adoption of the particular Jewish tradition about the rock that followed the Israelites in the desert does not commit the apostle to an approval of all the legendary stories that were already current in the Israel of his day. To quote a line from Epimenides, or Aratus, or Menander did not imply that every fragment of these writers had the sanction of Apostolic authority. The inspiration of selection sanctions that which it selects, and nothing beyond.

2. There is now, unhappily, little time for tracing the selective method of the Holy Spirit in the organisation and creeds of the Church. Even if it could be shown that in the Apostolic age the presbyterate was certainly modelled upon Jewish and the Episcopate on Gentile precedents, this would not of itself affect the question of their necessity to the true form and life of the Christian society. But the selective action of the Spirit is especially observable in the Church's use of ancient philosophy. The varying phases of that attitude were determined by the capacity of this or that school to furnish materials that in a given set of circumstances would assist the supreme work of the Spirit among men. In one century Platonism was distrusted as a solvent dangerous to Christian belief; in another it was laid under contributions by Christian writers, and even furnished terminology to the Catholic Creed. Early Fathers may ban

Aristotle; yet he is subsequently preferred to Plato, as not venturing upon topics as to which nothing can be known certainly without a revelation. The Church is led to reject such a symbol as the Homoousion at one time for reasons which are perfectly compatible with her adoption of it at another. The subject is too large to be more than hinted at. In this field, too, the Spirit is constantly choosing whatever has really come from the Word and Wisdom of the Father, and can be, at a given time and place, made serviceable to the interests of His people.

As we follow the Holy Spirit in this department of His work, we may venture without presumption to observe that His action is limited by His own attributes. He is the Spirit of truth, not only because it is the truth which He teaches, but also because He Himself is true. Therefore He cannot contradict Himself. If, for instance, He really through the Sixth Council pronounced Honorius to be a heretic, He cannot in our day have pronounced Honorius by implication to be infallible. Nor can He take into His service literary fictions which trifle with the law and the sense of truth. If it could really be shown that the addresses ascribed to Moses in Deuteronomy were the composition of a writer of the age of Josiah, who desired to secure for later legal decisions or institutions the countenance of the great lawgiver; or, that speeches attributed to David in the Book of Chronicles were never uttered by the real David at all, but only represent the opinion of a sacerdotal scribe after the Exile as to what David, if properly instructed, would or should have said; or, that passages in Daniel which claim to be predictions of still future events are really a history of events which the writer had himself witnessed, and are thrown into a predictive form, in order to invigorate national enthusiasm at a critical moment by the spectacle of the imaginary fulfilment of a fictitious prophecy; or, that the discourses of our Lord reported by S. John are not the *ipsissima verba* of the same Son of Man who speaks in the Synoptic Gospels, but only the voice of some Christian of the second century, or earlier, whose thought had been steeped in the Platonised Judaism of Alexandria, or perhaps of the apostle of love, who, however, could not distinguish clearly between his own and his divine Master's words; or, that the sermons of S. Peter and S. Paul in the Acts resemble each other too closely to have been really uttered by those Apostles, and only represent a literary effort to produce ecclesiastical harmony in the sub-apostolic age; or, that the pastoral Epistles of S. Paul, although expressly claiming to be his work, were in fact composed when the struggle with Gnosticism had obliged the Church to create a more elaborate organisation, and are largely due to an endeavour to procure for this organisation the sanction of the great Apostle's name;—if, I say, these

and other suchlike theories which might be mentioned could be shown to be based on fact, it surely would be shown at the same time that the Holy Spirit could not have inspired the writings in question. He is not responsible for speeches which cultivated pagans like Thucydides or Tacitus could naturally and without scruple put into the mouths of their heroes. Those great writers had no more the Divine law of truth upon their hearts and consciences than they had the Divine laws of love or purity; and nothing depends upon the historical worth of those fictitious speeches of theirs beyond the degree and quality of literary entertainment which we at this day may or may not derive from them. It is quite otherwise when we pass within the sacred precincts of the canon of Scripture. If the Holy Spirit is in any degree concerned in the production of its contents, we may at least be sure that language is not used in it to create a false impression, and that that which claims, on the face of it, to be history is not really fiction in an historical guise. The Book of Truth cannot belie either the laws of truth or the Spirit and Source of truth.

3. Once more, observe how the Holy Spirit gradually builds up or develops the Christian character. He takes of Christ's teaching and example, and shows it in its attractive beauty to the Christian conscience. This work of His is always going forward in those who will. As we pass through life, the Holy Spirit, while endowing us through sacramental channels with the new humanity of the Redeemer, discovers to us more and more the splendour and import of His person and work. We have learned, or think that we have learned, something of Truth, and we are suddenly startled at the deeper meanings of the Parable of the Sower. We have succeeded to an estate, or we have won academical honours, and we learn the import of the Parable of the Talents. Our thoughts have been led to dwell on the great problems of capital and labour, wealth and poverty, which are so prominent in the modern world, and we see a new significance in the history of Dives and Lazarus, and in the precept given to the rich young man. We have been brought up to measure the worth of men by some class or artificial prejudice, and the position assigned to the Good Samaritan, though we have read about his going down to Jericho all our lives, flashes at a certain moment upon our thoughts as an overwhelming discovery. We have come to suppose that spiritual liberty implies the rejection of all outward authority, and the Holy Spirit reminds us of the words about even the Scribes and Pharisees who sit in Moses' seat. We have wandered, it may be, from the path on which in earlier and happier years our feet had been set to go, and we find guidance and consolation as nowhere else in the story of the prodigal son. We are getting on in life, and mapping out, with ambitious

confidence, a future which God, perhaps, knows will never be ours, and we are brought to our senses by the record of the man who would pull down his barns and build greater on the eve of the very night on which his soul was required of him. And all through life, and assuredly not less as life is drawing towards its close, the great doctrines of redemption and grace are brought home with new power and clearness to the hearts and consciences of those who will. These are lessons which may make Pentecost a perpetual reality, and bridge over the interval between the most prosaic of lives and companionship with that incomparable Life which was lived nineteen centuries ago on the shores of the sea of Galilee.

And our Lord's words furnish us with a decisive criterion of the exact worth of dominant influences around us, of currents of thought which, now and again, would sweep us imperilously along with them, of the temper of our own time, of the Zeitgeist. It is natural to us to think that the days in which we live are wiser and better than any before, and that in throwing our thoughts without restraint into the main currents of the hour we are doing the best we can with our short span of life. And yet we might observe that many a past generation has cherished this notion of an absolute value attaching to the thought and temper of its day; while we, as we look back on it, with the aid of a larger experience, can see that it was the victim of an illusory enthusiasm. When we analyse the ingredients that go to make up the spirit of the time, of any one phase of time; and when we observe that, notwithstanding its stout assertions of a right to rule, it melts away before our very eyes like the fashions of a lady's dress, into shapes and moods which contradict, with equal self-confidence, its former self, we may hesitate before we listen to it as if it were a prophet, or make a fetish of it, as though it had within it a concealed divinity. The spirit of any generation may have, must have, in it some elements to recommend it; but assuredly it has also other and very different elements, and the question is whence do they come, and whither are they drifting? All that is moving, interesting, exciting in the world of ideas, in the successive conceptions of the meaning and purpose of life that flit across the mental sky, is not necessarily from, nor does it necessarily tend towards, the Source of good. The mere movement of the ages does not in itself imply a progress from lower to higher truth, from darkness to light; movement is possible in more directions than one. 'Brethren,' exclaims an apostle to some of his flock, to whom every claimant for speculative sympathy seems to have been welcome, 'brethren, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.... Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God' (1 S. John iv. 1-3).

OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

The test of the true worth of the spirit of our day, of the spirit which rules our own thoughts and lives, is the saying, 'He shall glorify Me.' All that wins for the Divine Redeemer more room in the thoughts and hearts of men; all that secures for Him the homage of obedient and disciplined wills; all that draws from the teachings of the past and the examples of the present new motives for doing Him the honour which is His eternal due, may be safely presumed to come from a Source higher than any in this passing world, and to have in it the promise of lasting happiness and peace.

H. P. LIDDON.

II. OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

The Gift of Tongues at Pentecost.

Are not all these Galileans? Acts ii. 7, 8.

HE whole scene stands out and apart from the preceding and succeeding history, like the scene of the adoration of the Magi, or the transfiguration on the Mount, typical, significant, apocalyptic, revealing and foreshadowing the mysteries and the glories of the dispensation it announces. A mystical descent, as it were, of heaven upon earth, a vision and revelation of the glories of the Heavenly City, unveiling the Bride of the Lamb as she shall yet be in her beauty, and her glorious apparel shown for one moment to the eye of men, and then vanishing away, to be seen of the eye of faith alone.

And, as we so contemplate it, the beauty and the significance of each symbol reveals itself to us—the tongues of fire, that tell of the fiery baptism that is to cleanse the Church of God, enlightening ever as it cleanses; the mighty rushing wind, mysterious in its origin and its direction, the wind of which we cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth, yet so mighty in its all-pervading power, symbolical of the force, the mighty, irresistible, spiritual force that is one day to fill the whole world, as its symbols filled the room that day; and then this inspired speech, this many-voiced utterance of the Spirit, proclaiming in every language the wonderful works of God, symbolic of the gathering together of the scattered sons of men around the true and only centre of humanity, the stilling of the strifes of speech, the healing of the disunion of men, the attuning of all earth's many voices in the great song of praise, that, like the roar of many waters,

is to sing the praise of the wondrous works of God. All these are here. All these together make the scene the type, and, for an instant, the foretaste of that Kingdom of God which in that hour the Spirit was descending upon earth to found.

I. Observe the peculiar manner in which we are told this miraculous effect upon the multitude was brought about. The effect was that the words of the Apostles were intelligible to them.

Before this day of Pentecost every one of these hearers, before they entered the Kingdom of God, must first become Jews, must be adopted into the nation of those whose creed they would accept and whose privileges they would share. They actually had done so. These proselytes had become Jews that they might have the God of the Jews for their God. Their Gospel, their good news, was a strictly Jewish Gospel; their faith, a Jewish faith; their hope, a Jewish hope. By accepting it they expatriated themselves; they became, as it were, naturalised citizens of another nation than their own. They had so far ceased to be Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Romans, Greeks; they were Jews.

And this, which was especially true of the Jewish faith, was, in a measure, true of all other religions save one. They were, one and all of them, intensely national. They reflect the climate, the scenery, the local condition of the country in which they take their rise. They reflect the temperament, the history, the traditions of the race to which they belong. The gods of the Greeks are unlike the gods of the Romans, as the Greek was unlike the Roman, and the gods of the East were unlike either. The genius of each nation revealed itself as distinctly in its temple as it did in its dress, or its speech, or its laws. When the Roman accepted the worship of the Greek, or of the East, it was because he, so far, had become in his teaching a Greek or an Eastern. He prayed to other gods of other races just as far as he had become of that race.

The idea of a Catholic Church, or universal religion, had never so much as entered into men's minds before.

It was not merely by what it had in common with other religions, but by what it had which differed from all other religions; not by its old truths made clear, but by new truths revealed, that Christianity gathered its multitudes from every nation under heaven.

II. And one thing more is too often forgotten by those who look lightly on the miracle of a universal religion, of a Catholic Church. That is, the intensely local and national character of these very facts on which it rested and the circumstances under which it took its rise. Who were these men who went forth to preach a universal religion, to found a Catholic, world-wide Church? Were not they all Galileans, the companions and friends of the son of a Galilean peasant,

trained from their youth up in the narrow and exclusive tradition of the most exclusive of all faiths, incapable themselves—incapable themselves for long after—of conceiving the idea of any Kingdom of God but a Jewish one? What did they go to tell men? Of the life and death of a Galilean, of a Jew. What were the sacred writings of their faith they carried with them? The writings of Jews. What were their dress, speech, habits, ideas? All Jewish, intensely Jewish! And yet out of this bigoted, narrow nature, out of this local, national, traditional faith, by the hands of these practically Jewish teachers, went forth this story of a Jewish life, these words of Jewish writers; and it gave rise to a faith which alone of all faiths was found to adapt itself to all races, to naturalise itself in every country, to be no more Jewish than it was Roman, no more Roman than Grecian, no more Grecian than Indian; a faith whose bitterest opponents at every stage were Jews, who opposed it because out of the Book the Jews believed in it drew its clearest proof that a Jew was to be the Lord of all mankind.

Whence hath this Man this power? How came this universal faith from this contracted and local creed? How from this narrow well, at which a few Jewish peasants quenched their thirst, has spread this ever-rising, swelling, and prevailing tide, which was destined to cover the earth? This is a strange fact, a marvellous fact, a miraculous fact. We believe that it needed nothing less than two great miracles to produce it; and nothing less than these can account for it. They are the two which are given as the reason of it in the first speech of its first preacher.

'God hath exalted, hath shed forth this.'

W. MAGEE.

WHITSUNDAY

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Peace.

Peace I leave with you: My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. S. JOHN xiv. 27.

ET us take the word peace in at least some of the senses which our Saviour would give to it, and which are on our part fulfilled, without entering on those wider questions which belong to nations and Churches, and which we individually cannot hope to solve. 'Peace I give unto you.'

I. There is first peace with ourselves. Every one knows what it is to be at peace with ourselves, or not at peace. We may be perfectly prosperous, and yet there is a secret pang which makes us ill at ease; there is a bitter thought which comes across us when first we wake in the morning; there is a something of which we do not like to speak, of which we do not like to hear, and of which, if possible, we would rather not think. And, on the other hand, we may be in suffering, pain, sorrow, illness, and yet be in perfect peace with ourselves, for the simple reason that we are engaged in doing our duty. It may be that our duty is only the duty of endurance, resignation, and submission. Never mind! If this be clear before us, and if we resolve upon this, it is enough. 'They too may serve who only stand and wait.' Or it may be that our duty is that of business, or public cares, or private ministrations. This, too, is enough. It shows the path before us straight and clear; it makes us indifferent of what people say or think of us; it makes us forget ourselves; it makes life worth living for; it makes death welcome. 'Keep innocency,' says the Psalmist, 'and do the thing that is right; for that will bring a man peace at the last.' To have said the right thing, though it cost us an effort; to have done the right thing, though it seemed hard at the time, this, you may be sure, leaves a tranquillity behind, which long outlives the moment, and makes us feel as if we were in a haven of rest, because the peace of conscience is indeed the peace of the Holy Spirit of Christ.

II. There is also another peace—peace with one another. Christ Himself was the great Peacemaker. In Him, Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, came together, and were one. He saw the good in publicans and sinners; He bore with the infirmities of the weak;

He gathered around Him characters most opposite each to each—Peter the rough fisherman, John the loving friend, Thomas the doubting sceptic, Joseph the rich councillor, Paul the eloquent, energetic, free-minded teacher. In that peace, too, each one of us may take part. It does not mean that we are all to think, and speak, and act in the same way. The world would be a very dull world, very different from what God intended it to be, if we all did think and speak exactly alike. The world of nature derives its beauty and its grace from the ups and downs, and rents and fissures, and straits and seas which cut it asunder, and give it all its various shapes and forms. And so it is with the world of man. We must differ. We cannot make all men to be of the same character, of the same pursuits, of the same tastes, and of the same opinions. But here, as in the natural world, we can, and we ought to prevent any difference, except the difference of sin, from becoming a separation. There was a name which, in the old pagan religion of ancient Rome, was given to the chief priests of religion, the name of Pontiff, those who were invested with pontifical power; and from them the name has in some degree been transferred to some parts of the Christian Church. The name as it was first applied meant 'the makers of bridges.' Why it was so used in the first instance we hardly know. Those old Roman pontiffs were, perhaps, specially employed in consecrating those mighty instruments of earthly peace and civilisation, the great roads and bridges by which the old Romans tamed and subdued the world. But in a moral and spiritual sense we ought all to be makers of bridges still. Pontiff or no pontiff, minister or no minister, every Christian who walks in his Master's steps, but most of all those who are pontiffs or those who hold any high place in the Christian hierarchy, ought to make it their special business to throw bridges across those moral rents and fissures which divide us one from the other. Across these various gulfs and chasms let every one lend a helping hand to build such bridges as best we can. There can not be a more truly pontifical work.

III. There is one other peace which includes and comprehends both the others—the peace of God, peace with God. Our hearts, it may be, are torn with scruples and cares, even in doing our duty. Our own sins rise up against us; the sins of others disturb us; our minds are filled with difficulties and distractions; the wars, and fightings, and quarrels, and noise, and business, and trifles, and anxieties, and whirl, and clatter of this great Babylon, wear out our strength, and our grace, and our repose, and our devotion. Where shall we find a haven of peace apart from the world, apart from ourselves, apart from others—a peace which shall silence these tumults, even though it cannot end them? It may, perhaps, have befallen some of us to stand

by the side of one of those brawling mountain streams which descend from our southern and western coasts into the sea. It rushes with its noisy waters down its stony channel; every pebble rattles in the torrent; every ripple makes a murmur of its own. Suddenly the sound ceases; a deep stillness fills the banks from side to side. Why? It is the broad sweep of the advancing tide of the ocean that has checked the stream and occupied the whole space of its narrow channel, with its own strong, silent, overwhelming waters. Even so it is with all the little cares, difficulties, and distractions which make up the noise and clatter of the stream of our daily life. They go on increasing and increasing, and engross our whole attention, till they are suddenly met and absorbed by some thoughts or objects greater than themselves advancing from a wider and deeper sphere. So it is in human things; so it is when in private life we are overtaken by some great personal joy or sorrow. The very image which I have just used of the brook and the sea has been beautifully employed by our greatest living poet to express the silencing of all lesser thoughts and aims by the death of a dear friend. So it is often felt in public concerns when all petty cares and quarrels have been drowned in the tide of public joy or sorrow which has rolled in upon us from the great world without. All the streams of common life under such circumstances, descending from their several heights, deep or shallow, turbid or clear, have been checked at one and the same moment, have been hushed at one and the same point, by the waters broad and vast sweeping in from the ocean, which encompassed us all alike. Every lesser controversy has then stood still; every personal murmur at such moments has been silenced by the grander and deeper interest which belonged alike to us all. What that figure of the brook and of the tide is in the natural world, what great joys and sorrows are in personal life, what great public events are in the life of a nation, that to every human being ought to be the thought of eternity, the peace of God. From a thousand heights the streams of life are ever rushing down. All manner of obstacles meet their course—the rough rock, the broken bough, the smooth pebble, the crooked bank. Each and all are enough to ruffle those shallow waters, and to obstruct those narrow torrents. But there is, or there may be, for ever advancing into each of these channels a tide from that wide and trackless ocean to which they are all tending; and deep indeed is the peace which those tides bring with them into the inland hills wherever their force extends. In mere earthly matters such as I have described it is remarkable how even a great excitement subsides from the face of the public world when the occasion for it has passed, how the brawling stream of our own concerns again rattles over its strong bed, and the beach is left squalid and bare by the returning sea. But not so, if so

we will—not so with the tide which flows in from the waters of eternity. These waters have no ebb. They ought to remain still and deep. They can always stay the impatient murmur of our wayward wills and thoughts; they will at last receive the stream of our cares and troubles into their own unbroken repose. It is so in all the thoughts we can have of that eternal world beyond the grave, and all that brings before us the reality and nearness of that unseen state, in all the things that bring before us the greatness of the destinies of man, and the greatness and the goodness of God. For think, above all, of what God is. Dwell for a moment on the thought of God, of God in His threefold essence this day, as it were, completed for us. Think of God, the one eternal Judge, perfectly just and perfectly merciful, who sees not as man sees, who knows whereof we are made, who knows our ignorance and our blindness, who sees us exactly as we are, and not as the unjust, capricious world sees us. That thought is the peace of God the Father. Think also of Christ; think of the mere greatness of His appearance in the world. Think of Him, if you will, in the simplest, humblest form in which He has ever been conceived. Think of Him in those general outlines of His mind and character which no critic, and no sceptic, has ever wished or attempted to question. Think of Him, if you will, only as the likeness of man; or think of Him, if you will, only as the likeness of God: whichever way you regard Him, the mere magnitude of the event of His appearance will always claim to make itself felt above all our jarring discords. The depth of the waters on which He walked will always be felt to be coming in from the depths of the world's history, and from the eternal sea beyond it. Look at the calmness with which He moved across this earth; His very look and word are a rebuke to the winds and waves; His very voice, the very sound of His name, amidst the darkness of the night, and the driving of the spray, tells us, 'It is I; be not afraid. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' In His calmness He bids us to be calm. In His peace, in His unshaken peace, He bids us feel the peace of God, for God was in Him reconciling us from ourselves to Himself. We love God, and we are at peace with God, because He first loved us, and because from the depths of eternity He is and was at peace with us through the eternal love of the eternal Son. Think also of the Holy Spirit whom we this day specially celebrate. Truly in the Spirit of God is the everlasting peace which broods over the face of the waters, whether of chaos or of cosmos; the atmosphere of holiness and goodness in which the still, small voice can be heard above the tempest; the unity of Christendom which depends not on the letter, but on the Spirit; the peace which lies not on the unruffled, outward surface, but in the silent depths below; the mighty music, as the

voice of many waters, of that great multitude, clothed in white robes, which no man can number, of all nations and peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, every man in his own tongue speaking the wonderful works of God, the boundless charity of God. It is the Eternal Spirit of which a departed poet has well sung—

'Now of Thy love we deem
As of an ocean vast,
Rising in tides against the stream
Of ages gone and past.'

A. P. STANLEY.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit comes to us in the stead of Christ. S. John xiv. 16, 17.

HE has come, not merely in the way of gifts, or of influences, or of operations, as He came to the Prophets, for then Christ's going away would be a loss, and not a gain; and the Spirit's presence would be a mere pledge, not an earnest; but He comes to us as Christ came, by a real and personal visitation. . . . The Saviour, when once He entered into this world, never so departed as to suffer things to be as before He came; for He is still with us, not in mere gifts, but by the substitution of His Spirit for Himself, and that both in the Church and in the souls of individual Christians.

He came for the foundation of the Church.

He came also for the guidance and the comforting of individual souls.

'What if He should not yet have filled our hearts? What if we should know nothing of His love, nothing of His comfort, nothing of His support, nothing of His light? A sad day must Whitsunday be to us then. We are like the impotent man by the Pool of Bethesda, who saw multitudes of other sick persons go down into those healing waters and become whole, and he himself remained year after year in that weakness. Oh, that the Holy Ghost would but come down on such, as He came down on that first day of Pentecost! not with a rushing mighty wind, but with the still small voice that is heard in the heart! not with fiery tongues, but with the fire of his love!'

Therefore, while the miraculous gift ceased after a longer or shorter time, the love and graces of God's Spirit remained as a permanent endowment in the Church.

The Pentecostal Gift was the fulfilment of the promise made by our Lord to His Apostles at Eastertide (S. John xx. 22).

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The supernatural workings of the Holy Spirit are the cause of good desires in the heart of man.

The graces of the Sacraments are due to the working of the Holy Spirit.

It is the office of the Holy Spirit so to quicken the conscience as to keep alive in it the moral sense of the distinction between good and evil.

This fire of the Holy Ghost is preserved. Firstly, by embers being placed beneath it; this signifies by the meditation upon death. . . . Life, let it be preserved ever so long as it is able to last, can endure but for a few years. On the day that S. John Eleemosynarius was crowned, the builders of the monuments asked him of what kind of marble he wished his sepulchre to be built: they did this that death might be remembered by him on the very day of his coronation.

If you make it a rule to say sincerely the first verse of the Ordination Hymn every morning without fail, it will in time do more for you than any other prayer I know, except the Lord's Prayer. They were the words of one who had the right to speak from experience, and who is now gone to his rest.

Veni, Creator Spiritus,
Mentes Tuorum visita.
Imple superna gratia
Quæ Tu creasti pectora.

Certainly this prayer does not take long to say; and perhaps, fifty years hence, in another state of existence, some of us will be glad to have acted on the advice. S. J. EALES.

The Comforter.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. S. John xiv. 18.

ONE subject above all others seems to me to run through these words, ever working up, as it were, again and again through the mere surface subject, showing that it was the one deep idea that was in the mind of Christ: His coming separation from them; His going away; His coming again, and the relation which was involved in the going away and in the coming again to them, and to His own, through all time.

I. Just for a moment look at this, and you will see, I think, what I mean. There is, again and again, a word dropped to make them bear it better when distinctly stated—the approaching separation,

the fact that they should see Him for a time no more, when He went to the Father. But then this was accompanied evermore with the promise of a return. And observe, the return is spoken of as a speedy return; as an abiding return; as giving them a presence which would be more perfect than anything they had yet enjoyed; as giving them a presence which would be specially more operative upon them, more quickening, more enlivening, more transforming, more satisfying. If you run through the words of this chapter I think you will see it at a glance; the living in Him, His living in them, the seeing all things, the seeing the Father, the knowing the love of the Father, the returning His love, the having a new principle of life within them which should be His, living in them, and then, at last, the consummation of all in His being with them for ever. No doubt, as is ever the case in prophecy, the same words reach on into long perspectives of fulfilment, vista after vista. You cannot say that the words do not apply in their completeness to their first fulfilment; but it is perfectly certain that they apply equally, if not with increasing fulness, to each successive fulfilment, to the very end; each successive fulfilment, adding something to the first. And we may remark that this applies specially to this promise of His coming again. There were three great fulfilments of the words that they should see Him again, and that their hearts should rejoice. Three great fulfilments. The first was His coming again. The very reason why this subject is so brought before us at this season; the coming again in the risen body with the marks of the Passion to teach them what they had been before unable to learn, to found a ministry among them, to breathe upon them, to give them that which was to enable them to lengthen out His own ministry, as well as to keep alive His life in their own words. This was the first, but there was one immediately beyond this. His coming after His Ascension into heaven by the Spirit. The two are so blended together in this verse, that it is impossible to separate them wholly one from the other. The coming again after a little while glides ever into the coming again by the Holy Ghost which is to bring Him home to each one of us; and this in its turn leads on, and continually passes into the third fulfilment, His coming again to gather all His own to Himself, the blessed, the undying hope which makes life tolerable; yea, which makes it pleasant to every one that believes in Him.

II. Now, I say, there are these three in the same words and this is the law concerning them: each one is a greater promise than the one before; each one gives a higher presence to those to whom the presence is promised, than the first fulfilment of it gave.

1. Look at the first of these. His coming amongst them during the forty days. There is no bound to the blessedness that it was to

them. The way in which it scattered all their fears, built up again their hopes, confirmed their faith, made them understand His past words, gave them the first idea of there being a presence of His which was not to be limited by the ordinary accident of His bodily presence as before; for that presence was in no way to be compared for its blessedness with the presence that succeeded it. That presence was, in the first place, short-lived. It more or less filled them with fear; they understood nothing about its law. It was suddenly broken off, and they did not know whether it would be renewed or not. He was with them and He left them, and they knew not whether He would come to them again. There were all these characteristics of what we may term, to them, an accidental presence: He was with one, but not at the same time with others. He came to the eleven, but when He came He was not with the two going to Emmaus. Whilst He was with the two going to Emmaus He was not with the Twelve. The law governing this presence was a dark, unrevealed in many respects, unsatisfactory law. All blessed when it yielded Him to them, but leaving them still in doubt as to what was to come after it. Compare all that with what did come after it, with the presence when the Holy Spirit was given. Think how far grander really, and more blessed that new presence was.

2. Then again, this presence was more abiding. The other presence was liable to separation. They were on the sea of Galilee when the storm broke upon them—and Jesus was on the land—poor souls! in their terror-stricken solitude. But now the presence was abiding. No accident could interrupt it, the world could not shake it, the heart might rise up to Him in the midst of the fires of martyrdom. It was the union of spirit with spirit bringing the spirit of the man into unity with the spirit of the Lord by the Holy Ghost the Comforter. And of course it was therefore all the more sustaining than that other presence had ever been, because each one could turn to it at any moment. He had not to go a journey to be with Mary and Martha in their house; Mary and Martha could turn then to Him by the Spirit which united them to Him.

And so observe one thing further, this presence was far more universal. The Lord incarnate, according to the laws that He has been pleased to give to that Body which He took, was not in one place and another at the same time. He went from one to another; comforted and healed one here, and then went on His way to Jerusalem, and met the blind man outside the city gate and healed him. He was not with one and the other at the same time, but the presence of the Spirit is the presence of every member of the body of Christ, with each one wherever he may be as completely and entirely as with another; with the dying child that has been taught to believe in

Him, and with the veteran saint in the midst of the hard conflict with sin. The presence of the Spirit is a universal presence, and the word in my text in Greek most briefly expresses this. It is a great pity that it is lost in the English. In the Greek it is not, 'I will not leave you orphans—I will come to you'; but it is 'I come to you.' It is that wonderful tense in the Greek, the universal present-future—'I am always coming. Now, I am coming to you; I am coming to another; I am coming to the end—I will not leave you comfortless, Ever to the end I am coming to you.'

SAMUEL WILBERFORCE.

Whitsunday.

The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. S. JOHN xiv. 17.

I. THE Church shows us what harmony, what union in variety, is there in the ways of the Spirit; He assimilates not all to one language, but adapts Himself to each, conforming Himself to every clime, preserving national distinctions, in like manner as individual character. 'Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself,' but thither go up the twelve Tribes. 'The Holy City, coming down from God out of Heaven,' of which the Lamb is the light, hath stones of every hue which earth and sea supplies. 'Upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold wrought about with divers colours.' She is clothed with the clothing of God, inestimably precious within, yet with variety of colours adorned without; of many nations, many characters, many tongues. Union formed of diversity, and harmony of various notes.

All is jubilant, for the great Jubilee hath come; the debtor is let loose; the forgiveness is sealed. They speak, and their tongues are of fire, and the hearts of those that hear 'burn within' them as they speak; and manifold are their voices, but all one the subject of their speech, which are the wonders of God; of Man gone up to heaven; of God come down below; of Christ having taken our weakness, and giving us of His power; of His putting on our flesh, and clothing us with His spirit; of the door of heaven opened, and gifts coming down from above. The house of Israel is gathered from abroad; the dead bones are come together; and now the Breath from the four winds has come. Fulfilled is the promise, 'I shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live.'

II. Such is the outward manifestation which attends the coming of the Comforter, and may well serve as a preparation of our hearts for those gracious words with which our Lord Himself promises the

IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

The manner and consciousness of being led by the Spirit considered.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Romans viii. 14.

E celebrate this day the miraculous mission of the Holy Ghost. By this most important event, as beneficial and merciful in its effects, as it was past all human conception or anticipation in its nature, the Christian dispensation, as far as regards its establishment, seems to have been completed. The commemoration of it, therefore, comes in the close of the solemn fasts and festivals by which it is the intention of our Church that every Christian amongst us should most devoutly keep alive the remembrance of all the leading facts attending the foundation of the gospel by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Accordingly, we have already celebrated His Incarnation, His Epiphany, or mediatorial manifestation, his Passion, Resurrection, and triumphant Ascension. The last, and to us very momentous, event of this great scheme of our redemption, was the descent, as upon this day, of the Holy Ghost, first on His Apostles, and thenceforward on His universal Church upon earth; to be with it, like Himself, and to bless it 'always, even unto the end of the world.'

Peculiarly honoured, indeed, were those Apostles of our Lord in being the chosen vessels appointed by the Almighty, to witness the sojourning of their Saviour upon earth; to hear the words of Him, who 'spake as never man spake'; and to see the miracles and 'mighty works which were wrought by His all-powerful hand.' Prophets and kings might well desire to see those things which they saw, and to hear those things which they heard. For, though under the dispensation of the Law, the special favour of God distinguished many individuals, and many splendid acts of divine power were exhibited, yet the establishment of the gospel shines forth like one continued radiance of signs and wonders and miracles; and far eclipses all that had gone before. 'If the ministration of death and the Law was glorious,' we may truly exclaim with the Apostle, 'how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?'—that Spirit, who, as if to characterise Him upon whom He descended, had

already come down in the likeness of a dove; that Spirit, whose power and brightness shone forth in every act of our Saviour's life, and attended His transcendent glory; which 'glory,' says the evangelist, 'we beheld,'—'the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father'; that Spirit, who as on this day, with 'a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind,' that filled all the house where they were sitting, appeared to the Apostles in the likeness of fiery cloven tongues, and rested upon each of them. Yet, although the Apostles were thus honoured; although they do stand distinguished among all the sons of Adam; although they are resplendent in the annals of the Church, and in the dark history of our nature, as the twelve jewels of the Apocalypse, or the twelve stars in the crown of a woman, who was clothed with the sun, still the established balance of good and evil was otherwise not unevenly held in their earthly destinations. If raised above others in their spiritual privileges, they had few temporal blessings of which to boast; if conspicuous for their religious honours and distinctions, they were equally remarkable for their perils, tribulations, and deaths. So that, while we perhaps would fain have taken their eminent stations, in first bearing the glorious standard of the Cross, we must ever remember their fearful conflicts and fiery trials: we must bear in mind how forcibly our natural infirmity, and love of ease, and dread of pain, as well as our ideas of happiness, and the enjoyment of life, would militate against our patient endurance of sufferings like those of Paul, or a martyrdom like that of Stephen.

Let us shortly examine in what way the Spirit may be said to 'lead us'; and, next, how we may know when we are lead by the Spirit.

I. In the first place, then, 'leading' is merely an act of guiding, or showing the way, and implies no compulsion upon him who is led. He may change his mind and go another way; he may take another guide and go in an opposite direction. The Spirit, therefore, does not constrain. He uses no influence or efficacy, which man may not successfully withstand. He only leads. He shows the path; and if He does not forcibly urge, He imparts a tendency and ability to follow. This He may be said to affect thus.

First, He inclines the will. The preparations of the heart are from God, who giveth us to will and to do. He relaxes the stiff and stubborn mind of our uncorrected nature; makes it less obstinate in wrong, more pliable toward good. Through the reading of the Word of God, which, you must ever remember, is the first great means or instrument by which He operates, He softens the heart, and in a manner opens it for the good seed. He thus gradually removes the barriers of pride, self-conceit, and perverseness, and makes way for a more humble and teachable temper. The blind and devoted attach-

ment to the world is called in question, and somewhat unfixed. A gleam of the spiritual, eternal world breaks in. The heart is dissatisfied, feels a void, and heavenly things begin to have some value. The solemn voice of Scripture seems to awaken some responsive feelings; and new desires and affections, not connected with the body, appear to be taking root within. Thus a tendency or bias of the soul is produced by the Holy Ghost towards those things, which, to the natural or worldly mind, are foolishness.

In the next place, this leading of the Spirit is effected also through the understanding. The mind is relieved of much doubt and darkness and perplexity; and its faculties begin to rest at length upon something which satisfies them,—something for the study and contemplation of which they seem to have been implanted. The intellect rises from low and frivolous and unworthy objects of its attention to things and prospects which at once elevate and enlighten it. The distinctions of right and wrong become daily more perceptible. The judgment adopts the one and rejects the other. In cases that admit of doubt, the thoughts take a new direction for light and knowledge; and clearer views of things imperceptibly produce higher principles; and higher principles are evidenced by more rational, more worthy conduct, and confirmed by better habits and a blameless life. Thus the path of duty is first plainly seen, then approved, then tried, then followed.

Thirdly, the Spirit of God may be said to lead men by his cooperation in their religious duties and offices of repentance, devotion, and general holiness. The fearful nature and effects of sin are brought home to the penitent soul in such a manner as to increase the abhorrence of it. The godly sorrow, which worketh repentance, is thus made more sincere, more effectual. The sinner is made to loath himself. In prayer and devotion, also, the same merciful guidance and assistance of the Spirit attend the soul of man. Our defects are supplied, our minds directed and sustained, our access to the Father facilitated, our petitions regulated. 'The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' So, also, in perfecting holiness we are indebted to the leading of the same blessed Spirit. The 'keeping of the heart,' the success of our good purposes, strength under temptation, recovery after relapses, the purifying of our corrupt affections, sincerity and simplicity of life, unwearied diligence in well-doing, and perseverance unto the end, all require, and all receive, the gracious leading of the Spirit. Thus, then, are our inclinations, minds, and hearts graciously guided and assisted in the momentous work of our salvation; and it may be observed, that nothing proceeds pros-

perously in the whole Christian life, without the merciful aidance of God's sanctifying Spirit.

II. We have now, then, seen in what way the Spirit may be said to lead us; we will now, therefore, inquire how we can know when we are led by the Spirit. And on this head the Word of God is our best and safest, indeed our only, guide. To this, therefore, let us have recourse; previously remarking that, without being led by the Spirit, none can be the 'sons of God,' or, in other words, closely resemble God; making His will their own, conforming themselves in all things to His laws; and by adoption through Christ be admitted to the privilege of sonship and inheritance, unless they at any time forfeit it by their own wilful disobedience and contempt of their spiritual blessings. Keeping this in view, then, we shall at once understand those passages of Scripture, which may teach us when we are led by the Spirit. 'As many as received Him'—that is, Christ,—says S. John in his gospel, 'to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.' Those, therefore, that 'receive Christ,' and 'believe on His name'—in other words, those that believe in Him, and obey Him—are the sons of God, and are therefore led by the Spirit. 'Now, whosoever is born of God,' says the same Apostle in his first Epistle General—that is, the real Christian, or the son of God, as the text calls him—'does not commit sin; for his seed,' his heavenly adoption, 'remaineth in him,' by the influence of the Spirit: 'and he cannot sin, because he is born of God'; for the moment he does sin, he loses his sonship, till reconciliation through Christ be made for him in hearty repentance.

Not to multiply quotations, the only proof that we are 'led by the Spirit,' and the only mode by which we can ascertain the time, is holiness,—a truly Christian life and conversation.

As we profess this day to celebrate the descent of the Holy Ghost, let us earnestly endeavour to secure to ourselves His aid and light and comfort in our hearts. Let us never quench His suggestions and convictions and reproaches, whenever He vouchsafes to communicate them. And, more especially, let us use all those means of grace by which His permanent residence in our souls may be effected; namely, the regular and careful study of God's Word, the zealous application of it to the amendment of our own hearts and lives; constant and fervent prayer; scrupulous and devout attendance upon the public worship of God; and frequent partaking of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

A. B. EVANS.

V. OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Giver of Life.

The Spirit giveth life. 1 Cor. iii. 6.

RIGHT and happy days in our domestic calendars are the birthdays of those we love. On these days our hearts are filled with thankfulness to God who gave our dear ones life.

And Whitsunday is a very great and happy day in the calendar of Christendom; for it is the birthday of our holy Mother, the Church. On this day, nigh two thousand years ago, the Church was born.

I. 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' How frequently the words are on our lips. How mechanically (accepting them indeed as one among others of the articles of our faith) we utter them. But how little do they mean to many of us. How little, how very little, do men think of everyday sins, which are sins especially against the Holy Ghost. How very little do many think or care about the work of the gentle Spirit who comes into men's bodies to make them pure; who strives with men; who is grieved by their sins; who is the Giver of every good thought and wish.

The Holy Spirit has been, from all ages, the great quickening power in God's universe.

At the Creation, when the 'earth was without form, and void,' the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters, and from chaos, and out of wild confusion, came order, light, and life.

At Pentecost, into the yet lifeless frame of the Church, the Spirit descended. And immediately the Church was alive. From that moment her supernatural life began. The Apostles, before that day timid, shrinking men, meeting together with closed doors, for fear of the Jews, from that hour out of weakness were made strong; waxed valiant in fight; rejoicing in bonds, and tribulation, and death. Peter, shrinking on the eve of the Crucifixion from the faintest breath of suspicion, now stands up the champion of the faith, and wins three thousand to the Lord.

II. And the Spirit not only gives life, but sustains it also. He came not to abide with His Church for ever. Hence her wondrous life in Him. She has seemed sometimes to go down, as though never

to rise again, under the storm billows of bitter persecution. Worse than this, she has sunk, at other times, into the cold tomb of indifference, and the degeneracy of what is holiest.

But she has come forth again out of the great depths with renewed strength; she has cast off her grave-clothes, and put forth fresh life and marvellous energy.

Quietly, secretly, without observation, the Holy Spirit of God has been working within us. In prayer now, now in Holy Communion, now by increased sensitiveness of conscience, at one time by fears, at another time by sorrow, He has made His Presence known and felt. And He is ever working within us. 'We are constantly receiving,' as Faber so beautifully says, 'what we ordinarily call inspirations. There is hardly ever a complete silence in our souls. God is whispering to us well-nigh incessantly. Whenever the sounds of the world die out in the soul, or sink low, then we hear the whisperings of God. He is always whispering to us, only we do not always hear, because of the noise, hurry, and distraction which life causes as it rushes on.'

'With Him,' says another writer, 'imperfect knowledge, limited opportunities, infrequent means of grace (if only we use them to the full) may lead us to high attainments of saintliness. Without Him the fullest measure of exterior advantages may but increase our condemnation—we may starve in the midst of plenty.'

J. B. C. MURPHY.

The Promise of the Spirit.

My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. HAGGAI ii. 5.

HAGGAI was the first prophet who rose up in the midst of the congregation of Judah after its return from Babylon, to declare to it the will and saving purposes of its God. Between him and Zephaniah lay the seventy years of the exile. The ten tribes of Israel had long since been carried into captivity, and in spite of the deceitful assurances of the false prophets, flattering the natural vanity by proclaiming peace when God foretold war, and resistance when God ordered them to submit, the apparently unpatriotic prophecies of Jeremiah had come to pass, and Judah also was delivered up, Jerusalem besieged and taken, and the king's palaces and the temple burnt to the ground. 'Zion was ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps.' But the seventy years during which the land of Judah was to lie waste were now ended. The Babylonian empire had fallen; God, though the Covenant Jehovah of the Jewish people, had sheep of another fold amidst whom He was working. Cyrus,

though no Jew, was to be Jehovah's shepherd; the Lord put it into the heart of Cyrus to grant permission to the Jewish captives to return, and the captives of Judah and Benjamin, led by Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the High Priest, returned to Jerusalem. Having arrived, they restored Jehovah's altar of burnt offering and re-established the sacrificial worship prescribed by the law. By the second month of the second year after their return they solemnly laid the foundation for the new temple. They had hardly commenced before the Samaritans came with a request that they too might take part in building again the Temple of the Lord, as they claimed to worship the God of the Jews. The request was refused. The Jewish people had learned something in captivity; they would not risk again the wrath of Jehovah by the temptation to promote His glory by working with a mixed people. The refusal provoked a bitter opposition, and the hands of the people were made idle by continued threats of war, and by hired counsellors employed to misrepresent the true object of the religious zeal of the Jewish nation. The work at the House of God at Jerusalem ceased during the rest of the reign of Cyrus, and yet these outward hindrances were not the only or the chief cause of the delay in rebuilding the House of God. The builders were frightened, they were misrepresented, but the people themselves had lost the true vision of that which really constituted their glory and their strength. They were taken up with their material prosperity; they were looking too low, at mere earthly greatness. Great lukewarmness had been shown from the very first at their return. The indifference was even remarkable among those most connected with the altar; of the twenty-four orders of priests four only returned; of the Levites only seventy-four individuals. Even the more religious wept because they saw that the outward splendour of their new temple would be less than that of the former. They were faint-hearted, their zeal had cooled down, they turned their thoughts to ease and personal prosperity. They ceiled their houses, and let the temple of the Lord lie waste. For fifteen years or more the work of the building had ceased, and the people were content to say: 'The time is not come, the time that the House of the Lord should be built.'

It was in such a time of outward ruin and inward depression that the prophet Haggai, now a man far advanced in years, had the courage to stand forth alone, first with the word of reproof, 'Consider your ways; is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses and this house to lie waste?' and then on their repentance with words of bold encouragement, 'Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerub-

babel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the High Priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.'

'Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning: that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.' Few periods of the sacred narrative are more fitted to fulfil this gracious purpose than the history of the Captivity and the Restoration; in it we see the chosen people of God triumphed over by the powers of the world, the place which God had chosen to put His name there desecrated, His temple destroyed, His Church overthrown, scattered—for the moment apparently stamped out; yet in the vision of the prophet we can see how all these opposing forces were but the instruments of discipline in the hand of the Most High. Not an arrow could be shot if the Lord forbid. The kings of the conquering armies were but the servants and shepherds of the Lord, whose flock for a time they were allowed to scatter. The city of Jerusalem might be taken, its walls might fall, yet the real cause of the destruction was made known when the prophet Amos saw in his vision the Lord Himself standing on the wall of Jerusalem, with the plumbline in His hand; true, it was on this occasion the symbol of destruction, but it was the same as the symbol of construction: it represented order, and plan, and purpose, and it was held in the hand of the Lord; it was intended to teach the faithful through the prophet that He who had built up was now taking down, and that He could rebuild again; it was a faint image of that most perfect example of the Church's confidence and hope, in the presence of the opposing world, which said: 'Thou couldst have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above.'

And yet this is not the whole nor the greater part of the comfort and hope which this Scripture brings us. God not only controlled the forces which opposed the Church at Jerusalem, but He was with her even when she seemed most subdued. His spirit was with Ezekiel and the captives by the river of Chebar, and the dry bones were commanded to live, and to Daniel, though in captivity, He revealed the rise and fall of dynasty after dynasty, bringing them up before his prophetic vision as easily as summer clouds. His Church was in captivity, but His arm was not shortened; in His hand were still the corners of the earth. And thus, when the hour for the return arrived, the all-sufficient word was speedily given to the Prophet Haggai, 'I am with you, My spirit remaineth with you: fear ye not.' How all-sufficient this ground of comfort was, we can to-day more fully understand.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Spirit of God is God the Holy Ghost, with His manifold gifts; where He is, is all good, there is life, and light, and fire of Love. He is the Lord, the Giver of Life; as the soul is in the body so God the Holy Ghost is in the Church, Himself its life, and bestowing on all and each every good gift as each and all have need.

I. For us, to-day, who are spared to give thanks again another year to Almighty God for the fulness of His great Pentecostal gift, it might be enough that we repeat our great hymn of faith, and testify our unchanged belief steadfastly in that faith once delivered to the saints, for it is a chief use of the recurring festivals of the Church, that year by year, in spite of the discordant utterances which we may have heard, we testify that our faith is still unchanged, so to-day we give thanks to God and say 'the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, yet not three Gods but one God.' God is one and yet three, three Persons and one God, God the Holy Ghost is one yet are three diversities of gifts. We cannot speak of them all; but of one point in reference to all we should to-day make sure, that the Holy Spirit is the author of them all; so varied, so wonderful, so beautiful are the manifold divine intricacies in which we live, that it is in some sense not wonderful if man becomes absorbed and confounded in his researches and discoveries in the things which he sees. To-day we are reminded of the Author and Giver of life. He is the finger of God, giving as it were the last touch to all the perfection and beauty which we see around us. Of all His varied operations let us confess again to-day that He is the Perfecter and continued support. And yet while we cannot speak of all, or of many of the operations of the Holy Spirit, one, and that a most principal one, the Church brings again prominently before us to-day; to-day is Whitsuntide and also the beginning of Ember week, the week that is set apart by the Church, with special prayer and fasting, in preparation for the ordination next Sunday. Next Sunday our Archbishops and Bishops will again begin the hymn 'Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,' singing it as a solemn prayer while the candidates are kneeling waiting for admittance into the holy office of priesthood. It would be a blasphemous mockery and impudent imposition to use the words 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands,' unless the ministry is intended to be a peculiar channel of divine grace, and to be regarded as the appointed instrument for singular operations of God the Holy Ghost; unless, in fact, it claims divine authority and power. On Whitsunday, the Sunday which begins the Ember week, the week of special preparation for the Christian ministry, we may well again repeat our belief in the old teaching of

the Christian Church: that the ministry which we have is according to the will of Christ our Lord, and actuated by the Divine Presence of God the Holy Ghost. 'My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.'

II. An apostolic ministry does not mean merely a ministry springing out of the earth at the date when the Apostles lived, but a ministry which through the Apostles has the divine sanction of the will of our Lord Himself. It is this ultimate resolution of the ministry into the divine will which is at once the cause of the contention, and which is alone worth contending for. Our blessed Lord forewarned us that it would be so when He asked that vital question regarding the ministry of the Baptist, 'The baptism of John, was it from Heaven or of men? answer Me.' The Pharisees felt the danger of saying definitely it was from men, for the people still believed in the supernatural and in God, all men counted John as a prophet, but far more did they see the importance of committing themselves to a statement that the ministry was divine, 'If we shall say from Heaven, He will say, Why then did ye not believe him?' To believe in the minister would involve them in a belief in Christ, belief in Christ must imply confession of sinfulness and absolute self-surrender. They felt the pressure of the Divine Presence in the question of the origin of the ministry: they adopted a consistent Agnostic position, and withheld their confession both of the ministry and of Christ. The same warning is implied in other words of our Lord regarding His own ministry. 'I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another should come in his own name, him ye will receive.' To come in one's own name is to come to the world as one of its own, and the world will receive its own. The greater the ability the more flattered does the world seem by the greatness of one of its own; it is but a part of itself after all that it is called upon to obey. But if a man come in the name of another, and that other not of this world but from above, then the whole relation becomes changed, and the sinful creature feels instinctively a shrinking at the divine authority and presence, which through the messenger is drawing men. 'I am come in My Father's name and ye receive Me not.' Such a ministry could not, of course, be taken up and laid aside like a mere civil appointment. This Hooker has admirably expressed: 'They which have once received this power may not think to put it off and on like a cloak as the weather suiteth: to take it, reject and resume it, as oft as themselves list, of which profane and impious contempt these later times have yielded, as of all other kinds of iniquity and apostasy, strange examples; but let them know who put their hands unto this plough, that once consecrated unto God they are made His peculiar heritage for ever. Suspensions may stop, and deprivations utterly

put off the use or exercise of power before given; but voluntarily it is not in the power of man to separate and pull asunder what God by His authority coupleth.' And this was evidently the teaching of the Church at the close of the second century, for Tertullian rallies the heretics of his day with their 'careless, capricious, and inconsistent ordinations,' wherefore he says, 'One man is Bishop to-day, another to-morrow; to-day deacon who to-morrow will be reader; to-day Presbyter who to-morrow will be layman, for even to laymen,' he adds, 'they commit the priestly offices.' Such a system he well calls 'futilis humana terrena.' It tells nothing against this divine origin and power of the ministry that it borrows names and outward form from organisations existing in the world in which it works; this is nothing more than the taking of the dust of the ground to make the first Adam, or taking of the flesh of the Blessed Virgin to accomplish the Incarnation of the Son of God. This was done 'not by the conversion of the Godhead into Flesh, but by taking the Manhood into God.' He was very God, and He became very Man, and the Spirit of God dwelt in Him without measure. We see Him in the tabernacle of His human flesh, full of grace and truth. The common thorn-bush of the desert, burning, yet unconsumed.

III. We may, then, on this festival of the Holy Spirit, acknowledge our thankfulness and encourage ourselves by the words of the Lord, 'My Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not.' But the whole context of the passage teaches us that the possession of a ministry with divine authority, and empowered with the divine energy of the Holy Ghost, should be no mere substitute for human energy, or for the exercise and development to the uttermost of the human faculties. The message of the prophet Haggai conveyed indeed the essential assurance of the Divine Presence, 'My spirit is amongst you,' but it was also an earnest exhortation to work, 'Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the High Priest, and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work.' It is an exhortation, not only to work, but to combined, united work. We have, in this Ember week, been vindicating the special claim of the Christian ministry to a peculiar share in the supernatural gifts of Pentecost; but this implies no monopoly. When our Saviour 'ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and received gifts for men.' Not only Joshua the High Priest, but also Zerubbabel the governor, and all the people are exhorted to take their part in the restoration of Jerusalem and work. It should be the same with us now. The clergy are not the Church, but the laity and clergy, the whole body of the faithful together. The ministry is for the people. 'He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of

the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' For this great end all should unite together in the power of the Spirit, 'who divideth to every man severally as He will.' The peculiar gifts of the Christian ministry are no hindrance to the gifts of other men; rather they are to enable other men to obtain and exercise the gifts that may be theirs. 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.' The real question of permanent importance in the present day is this, to bring men to acknowledge that they do what they do by the ability that God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ. In no spirit of narrowness, then, I would say to all on this feast of Pentecost, 'My spirit remaineth amongst you; fear ye not.' And to any of you, into whose hearts the Holy Spirit may have breathed high hopes of giving yourselves for the service of your fellow-men, in the ministry of the Christian Church, to you I would say, look up once more and behold the great Head of the Church, as He manifested Himself to the Angel of the Church of Sardis, as He that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars. The seven spirits of God are the Holy Spirit in His sevenfold operation, the seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches, and both are in the hand of Him who is the Head of the Church. He who takes you into His ministry will give you His Holy Spirit, and His grace will be sufficient for you. 'Put not your trust in princes, or in any child of man.' Look not to any worldly empire as the source of your authority. All such organisations change and perish. Look round and see their ruins; yet the Church continues, and she is ordered as she was in the Apostolic days, according to the divine will, and indwelt by the same Divine Presence, and therefore lives and will live. To this you may safely trust; the outward circumstances of our Church may, in your day, be changing; the opposition to her divine authority may for a time increase, but Wisdom will be justified of her children, the Holy Spirit that empowers the ministry will witness to that ministry in the hearts of the people. Be fearlessly resolved to rely on His Almighty power; you will find that it suits the needs of men. Such fearlessness is no vain enthusiasm, but the result of calm, reasonable faith in Christ, for He has promised to be with us in far richer terms than He ever spake by the mouth of His holy Prophets. Since He became Incarnate, He has made the Church His Bride. His love for her will never change. He has pledged His unchanging presence, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.'

BISHOP KING.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Spirit Glorifying Christ.

He shall testify of Me. S. John xv. 26.

He shall glorify Me. S. John xvi. 14.

THE Spirit's witness as the glorifier of Christ. How does He witness to Christ? How does He glorify Christ?

I. He did so by the preaching of the Apostles. Why the endowments of Pentecost? The tongues as of fire? These tongues were to be vocal with utterances for Christ. The words of Peter then and there, and in Solomon's porch, to council, rulers, priests, and people. The great wonders and miracles of Stephen, his irresistible words of wisdom, his apology; the preaching of Philip, and of Paul, as he began straightway to deliver his message at Damascus and confound the Jews, all, full of the Holy Ghost, bare testimony to Christ and glorified Christ. Christ crucified, Christ risen, Christ reigning, Christ returning, Christ the prophet, Christ the priest, Christ the king, Christ the end of the law, the theme of psalmists and seers, the name of Jesus as the only 'name under heaven whereby we must be saved.' This was their uniform, simple, unvaried testimony. 'We are His witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Ghost.' They preached the gospel 'with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.' And whensoever and wheresoever that gospel came home to the consciences and hearts of men, not in word only, but in power, it was 'in the Holy Ghost.' The speakers spake 'not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.' Now the receivers received, through 'the Spirit which is of God'; by Him they knew 'the things that are freely given were of God.' He convinced of sin by showing that the crowning, damning sin was 'because they believe not on Me. Of righteousness because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more. Of judgment because' (through Christ) 'the prince of this world is judged.' No words could prove more tersely or comprehensively express the Spirit's work than these words of Christ, 'He shall testify of Me, He shall glorify Me,' Christ in all His adaptation, all His sufficiency, all His preciousness, all His work and worth.

II. And so in apostolic writings. Those writings of which it is no less true that of Old Testament histories, psalms, and prophets that 'holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' Now it was that according to Christ's own promise, the things which once they had not been able to hear were revealed to inspired penmen, and the Spirit of truth guided them 'into all (the) truths.' And the Church must meet with her bold, unhesitating, solemn pro-

test the lax and latitudinarian views of our own and of other days, by which the oral teachings of Christ are elevated to the disparagement of His teachings by the pens of Paul and Peter and James and John and Jude. And while S. James speaks, from his special standpoint, in phraseology less characteristically evangelical, every page of every epistle is fragrant with Christ. Their writings are one consensus of the Spirit's testimony to Christ. Each and all centre in the glorifying of Christ. Extending to all the Scriptures of both volumes what has been specially applied to the Apostolic epistles, we say in the words of Bishop Heber, uttered more than sixty years since as he closed his Bampton Lectures, 'By this book the Paraclete has guided the Church into whatever truths the Church of Christ has at any time believed or known; by this book and the doctrine which it contains, He has convinced the world of sin, and justified the Son of Man from the malicious slander of His enemies; by this book He consoles us for the absence of our Lord, and instructs us in things to come; by this He reigns; where this is found His kingdom reaches also; by this weapon, proceeding from the mouth of God, shall the enemies of His Christ be at length extirpated from the world; and by this, it may be thought, as by the rule of God's approbation, shall the secrets of all hearts be finally made known, in that day when whomsoever is not found written in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire.'

III. Again: Does the Holy Ghost work as the Sanctifier? Here, too, 'Christ is all and in all.' He is 'made unto us sanctification.' And that not only in what may be termed distinctively a ritualistic sense, as in well-known passages in the Epistles to the Hebrews, in which sanctification is connected directly with His Offering and Blood, but in the more frequent sense of this term. For how does the Sanctifier sanctify? Not by teaching us that the personal holiness of Christ is imputed to us for our sanctification, as Christ's legal righteousness is imputed to us for our justification. Imputed sanctification is grievous and perilous error. But the Sanctifier sanctifies us by and in Christ. He is given to us as Christ's members. We are 'sanctified in Christ Jesus.' To convince of sin and to lead to holiness. He reveals to us the spirituality and searching power of the law of God. But we learn 'the infamy of sin' at the Cross, from the atonement of the great Sin-bearer, as it pleases the Lord to bruise Him. We learn it at Gethsemane and from the hidings of His Father's face. And whence does the Sanctifier draw the motives to self-consecration and holiness? Have we a pattern? The love of Christ constraining, the Blood of Christ redeeming, by these the Spirit works. And shows us, too, that the Birth and Death, the Burial, the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ are not

only the historical bases of our faith, but present symbolically types to which we are to be moulded, as dying, even by mortification and crucifixion to sin, as buried with Him, as quickened with Him to newness of life, as rising with Him, even now and here in affections, in life, in hope, to the things above, where He sitteth on the right hand of God. Our sanctification, in all its gradual processes, is effected in one continuous but varied testimony to Christ.

IV. Nor does the Comforter work otherwise in comforting. The Paraclete in the heart is the witness to the Paraclete whom we have with the Father. The Spirit making intercession within us, intercedes through the Intercessor above. He draws His divine consolations, amid all our sins and conflicts, our crosses and disappointments, our anxieties and fears, from none other source but Christ's; showing us what He is to us, what He has done, is doing, and shall yet do for us. Every anodyne and balm is mixed, in some measure, with Christ's most precious Blood. Is our grief spiritual, the grief of a burdened and bleeding conscience, the grief of the penitent and the backslider? The Spirit whispers, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee, for Christ has died.' Having shown us what is in ourselves, He shows us what is in Christ. He unlocks the silent or stammering tongue, to cry, 'Abba, Father, in Christ I am Thy child.' Amid our temptations He sends us to the throne of grace to 'obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need,' in the remembrance that 'we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.' Or is it some earthly sorrow under which we need 'the consolations of God?' Do we weep by the grave of a loved one reft away by death? The Comforter reminds us that Jesus wept by the grave of him He loved; and bids us turn to the heart of the friend 'that sticketh closer than a brother.' 'He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'

Thus from some parts of Christ's works, from some one of Christ's offices, from some word of Christ's utterances, from Jesus upon earth, upon His Cross, or upon His heavenly throne, the Comforter comforts by testifying of Christ, by glorifying Christ.

V. Nor is Christ less prominent, as the Spirit tells of our glorious future, of the future of the Church, the believer, and of this groaning and travailing earth. All is full of Christ. Christ on the judgment-seat, as He to whom all judgment has been committed; before whom we must stand; from whose lips we must hear our welcome or our doom. His coming the great hope, in Him our resurrection, in His kingdom our blessedness, with Him our glory. When our faith and patience are tried sorely by the mysteries of this life, with all its sins and sorrows, when we mourn under the apparent victories of evil and of the evil one, when we are perplexed by paradoxes and

discords, in a world made and ordered by Him who is perfect in wisdom, might, and love. When heresies and divisions and apparent failures seem to falsify the promise of His presence with His Church, as if His faithfulness, or love, or power had failed. While death is repeating His countless triumphs every hour, then does the Spirit rebuke our impatience and our faithlessness, then does He bid us lift up our hearts and heads. Whither? To whom? To Christ, Christ returning, Christ judging, Christ putting all enemies, even the serpent and death, 'the last enemy,' under His feet. To Christ the resurrection and the life, the keys of Hades and of death at His girdle, returning from 'the redemption of' His 'purchased possession,' the Church, to Christ returning, from the deliverance of this groaning creation, 'into the glorious liberties of the children of God.'

Already has He fulfilled, is now fulfilling, three of His fourfold promises, the promise of His prayers, the promise of His presence, the promise of His Spirit. No less surely will He fulfil the greatest and the last, 'I will come again.'

Thus then it has been, so shall it be to the end. It is thus by the agency of the Spirit, as witnessing to Christ and glorifying Him, that the work will be carried on and perfected. It is this ocean which you have yet to explore. And lest you imagine that there will soon be little need for you to hear of Christ, that sermons will become useless to you, that you have studied your Bibles so deeply as that you have nearly sounded the depths, the Apostle reminds you that the love of Christ is a love 'which passeth knowledge.' You may have reached the limited extent of your intellectual knowledge of it as a theologian; you have yet to feel it in stronger intensity as a saint. The wisest, the holiest, the most joyous believer among us may yet become more and more holy, more joyous, under the teaching and sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Ghost, but all by knowing more, or knowing more experimentally, what is to be done with Christ.

The Holy Ghost is no mere Whitsunday theme. Are we doing more than giving His personality, His Deity, His offices, His agencies, a place in our creeds? You may be religious without Him. But your religion shall be as a lifeless orthodoxy, a body without pulse or heart; you may be wise without Him, wise even in the Scriptures, wise in theology, wise in controversy, but never 'wise unto salvation.' You may be moral without Him. But your morality shall be conventional decorum, or self-righteous Pharisaism, not the holiness which is our character from heaven. 'You may be happy without Him. But there will come a time, when 'miserable comforters are ye all!' shall be your bitter experience. Simple, but

decisive words. 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' CANON MILLER.

The Power of Christianity.

His word was with power. S. LUKE iv. 32.

OUR Lord not only claimed to speak with authority, 'His word was with power.' Behind His claim to authority, men felt that there was that which justified His claim. 'All power,' He has said, 'is given unto Me in heaven and in earth'; power 'to heal sicknesses,' and remove physical evil; 'power against unclean spirits to cast them out'; 'power to forgive sins' as only God forgives, and to bid the poor fallen sinner to 'go, and sin no more.' Whether in the physical or the moral world Christ claimed to speak with authority; and 'His word was with power.'

Judged, at least, by those among whom He lived and wrought, His claim justified itself in that region where a pretended authority would be most easily found out. Evil spirits recognised His voice. With authority and power He commanded, and they obeyed. If men question His power in the moral world, His power to forgive sins, Christ refers them to that which is open to the eyes of men. 'Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins. Then saith He unto the sick of the palsy, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.'

Thus by proving His power in the world of nature, Christ prepared the minds of the Jews to believe in His power in the moral world. With us it is necessarily different. We have exchanged the naively objective attitude of ancient thought for the distrustful introspectiveness of modern days. And it is easier for us to believe in miracles on the strength of what we know of Christ's power in the moral world than to base our faith in that power on the evidence of miracles. We must begin with what is nearest to us. And the present power of Christ in the moral life is nearer to each one of us than the miracles which witnessed to that power in days of old.

When, however, we claim for Christ and Christianity power in the moral world, we notice that there is a sense in which the claim is generally admitted. Christian morality has won its way to a secure position. Men who are far enough from accepting the Christian faith will in most cases admit the Sermon on the Mount to an unique place in the history of the ethics. Whatever views may be held as

to the Teacher Himself, it is generally, if not always, conceded that His moral teaching is without a rival. As the highest known ideal of character it appeals to the conscience, and conscience recognises its superiority. Indeed, if Christianity meant only the publication of certain high moral principles, it might reckon on few open enemies.

But, in truth, Christianity, like the Sermon on the Mount itself, means much more than this. Had Christianity been merely the introduction into the world of a new and higher moral ideal than men had known, had it presented us only with a view of human character, which after ages could recognise as final and complete, it would have been, as it were, in the same plane with other moral ideals, differing from them in degree, but not in kind, standing supreme above them only in its universality and permanence, as the perfect character of man as man. But such an ideal would paralyse, not inspire, effort. The more true, the more perfect it was, the more hopelessly would it seem beyond the reach of the ordinary man. Imagine to yourselves the Christian ideal, with its utter unselfishness, its unworldliness, its universal benevolence, its self-renunciation, its humility, its purity, revealed to the world, which witnessed its first proclamation, as an end to be aimed at, not by philosophers or saints, but by all mankind, as the true human life. Does not our knowledge of human nature enable us to forecast the result? The philosophical moralist passes by on the other side; and the saint who knows more fully than any the reality of moral evil, the weakness of man's effort after good, turns away in despair. I was alive once, but now that I have seen the vision of the holy and just and pure I feel, as I never felt till now, the weight of this body of death. And what is the appeal of such a character to the ordinary man? It is so far above him, and beyond him; it implies such a reversal of his own life and the lives of others, as he is wont to see them around him, that it seems impossible—a mere visionary's dream, like the picture of a golden age expressing merely the obverse of things as they really are. And

> 'Who can hold a fire in his hand,
> By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?
> Or clop the hungry edge of appetite,
> By bare imagination of a feast?
> Or wallow naked in December snow,
> By thinking on fantastic Summer's heat?'

This impracticability of the Christian ideal is plainly admitted in the latest attack on Christianity, the most significant attack, perhaps, of recent years. We are told that 'this pursuit of a spirituality utterly beyond attainment by ordinary mortals, beautiful as it is when

attained, operates injuriously on the morality of average men and women. The standard proposed is so exalted that instead of attracting the ordinary person to aim at reaching it, it discourages and repels him. He is inwardly conscious that he cannot possibly reach it, even if he tries ever so much.

This is a remarkable admission. Time was when it was said: We accept your Christian morality, we recognise the perfection of its moral ideal, but supernaturalism, dogma, priesthood, and sacraments, these we can do without. And when the Christian dared to suggest that there is no sure foundation for the Christian virtues but the Christian verities, he was accused of undermining morality by making it dependent on religion. And now, we are openly told, by one who has himself abandoned the Christian faith, and believes that the age is abandoning it too, that the Christian moral ideal is too exalted, and that people are 'deterred from embracing a serious view of life's duties, just because a standard of such exalted perfection is proposed to them that they know it is no use attempting to reach it.'

It is something for us to have learned from such a source the close connection of the Christian faith with the Christian life; to be reminded that the Christian ideal, treated merely as an ideal, and apart from that supernatural grace whereby it was to be realised, would, for the great mass of men, paralyse rather than stimulate moral effort. It would sound to them like mockery to say, 'Be holy, be pure, be humble, sacrifice self, live for others,' if that command did not come from One who could give them power to obey.

But Christ's word was with power. He never said to the starved souls, 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled,' without giving them that which they had sought in vain. He never said to the paralysed cripple, 'Arise and walk,' without giving new strength to the feeble limbs. 'Thy sins be forgiven thee' was neither a forensic fiction, nor a charitable hypothesis, nor the kindly expression of a benevolent wish. 'His word was with power.' If it had not been so, Christ might have been a teacher still, a pattern still, but not a Saviour. It would have been true to say of the Gospel, as S. Augustine says of the Law, as we may say of all non-Christian ethical systems, *jubere tantum non adjuvare poterant*. But Christ's word was with power, and it was the consciousness of this that enabled the first Christians, with all their knowledge of human weakness and moral evils, to aim so high, and yet to go forward so hopefully, so triumphantly, into the struggle.

And if we ask in what the power of Christianity lay, as distinct from the authority which a high and pure ideal exercises over the conscience, we find that (I.) it placed the Christian in organic relation with a higher and supernatural life. Nothing could have brought the

high ideal of Christianity within the region of practical effort for the ordinary man, but the belief that a new power had entered into human nature, and that man had become something different from what, in sad experience, he knew himself to be. 'Teach a man,' it is said, 'that he is something greater than he is, and he will soon come to be what he believes himself to be.' Christianity did not merely teach men that they were greater than they thought; it claimed to make human nature greater than it had been. As Jews, the first Christians were familiar with the thought of a people singled out to a kind of priesthood among the nations brought near to God, and entrusted with His oracles, that through them He might educate the world. But that old idea would not contain the wider truth, the larger hope of Christianity. So the new wine burst the bottle. Jewish exclusiveness must be abandoned, if the world is to receive the idea of the redemption of man as man, through Him in whom differences of Jew and Gentile, male and female, barbarian and civilised, disappear, because He is the perfect Man. That notion of the universality of Christianity, though but slowly realised by the first disciples, is yet implicit in Christ's own teaching; and the Incarnation, both in the order of time, and in the order of thought, is the ground of belief in the brotherhood of man, in it is the justification for that 'enthusiasm of humanity,' which has become a catchword of the day. And the sure hope which carried the Christian forward, was a supernatural hope. Chosen out of the world, the object of the world's hatred and persecution, he was yet, as he believed, the purpose of God, the world's conqueror. By the mere fact of his being a Christian, he was (if we may use such a phrase) on the winning side in the great moral struggle between light and darkness. The future was with him. For a moment his faith might fail, when Christ, the embodiment of all his expectation, died upon the Cross. But with the new assurance of the Resurrection, the new Presence of Whitsunday, he went forth fearlessly to overcome the world, the forces of the world, the forces of evil within and around him, knowing that he was endued with power from on high for the regeneration of man.

Judged by human standards, nothing could have been more fanatical than this attempt. A few hundred at the most, without learning, without influence, debarred from the uses of the world's weapons, they went out to obey their Lord's command, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.' They knew that 'His word was with power,' that the 'I ought' implied the 'I can,' and in faith of that supernatural power which was theirs, they went forth to the struggle. 'Be of good cheer,' their Lord had said, 'I have overcome the world.' And when, as He had foretold, there came upon them 'tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or

sword,' the Christian fearlessly declared, 'In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.'

It is hard for us even to understand the immediateness of the presence of the supernatural world to the early Christian Church. Those words of the Jerusalem Council, 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us,' imply a certainty of divine direction, which, in a later age, would seem almost profane. 'Who art thou?' said the Emperor to S. Ignatius, 'Who art thou who dost disobey my orders, and leadest others to disobey?' And the answer is, 'I am Theophorus, the God-bearer, for I carry Christ within me.' It is not to our present purpose to speak of the means by which the living union with God was secured by prayer and sacrament. Certainly it never occurred to the first Christians to regard Sacraments as religious luxuries for those who aspired to something more than the ordinary Christian life. They were the normal channels by which the new life flowed into their souls; they were not ecclesiastical ordinances, as men sometimes think of them now, but moral instruments, having their natural and necessary place in the moral life. The Christian conception of moral evil is unintelligible apart from this belief in the immediate relation with the supernatural. That 'horror of sin' which a recent historian of ethics speaks of as characteristic of Christianity, arose from the belief that moral defilement separated from the supernatural life, and broke the contact with the divine society in which the life of Christ was realised.

II. But it was not merely to the belief in a presence with them of a supernatural life that Christianity owed its power. The Divine touched the human in an intensely personal relationship.

We see this most plainly in that virtue in which the Christian stood most opposed to the heathen world—the virtue of purity. Here, more than in either of the other parts of temperance, Christianity was committed to an ideal, unknown and unintelligible to heathen morals. We know how the controversy with heathen impunity showed itself in the early days of the Church. What were the weapons which the Christian teacher used? What was his appeal? We have been told of late years that 'there is no true foundation for the strictest sexual morality other than the social duty which the Greeks asserted.' Did he appeal, as we might now, to reverence for human personality? To a chivalrous respect for womanhood? To the theoretical, the actual, equality of all members in the body politic? There is not one word of this, nor could there be, for as yet there was, outside the Christian Church, no recognition of humanity as a family with equal rights. What, then, is his appeal? It is direct, personal, immediate. 'What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your

own?' 'Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.'

Even those relations which to many in the present day seem to begin and end with man, to be simply relations between man and man, were for the Christian taken up into his personal devotion to Christ. There were also for him two kinds of love, love to God and love to man. Charity was always a theological virtue; it was love of God, and of our neighbour in God. It was that personal relation of the Christian with God in Christ which saved his service of God from melting away into a dreamy pantheism, and his service of man from being dissipated into a generalised feeling of benevolence. The Master had said, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.' And the disciple was quick to interpret the thought. If Christ gave up His life for us, we ought also to give up our lives for the brethren. Such a necessary consequence is it that S. John fearlessly argues from the effect to the cause. 'We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.' And 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'

Thus, in his devotion to the service of man, no less than in his efforts to attain to holiness and purity in himself, the same power of personal appeal was present with him. Who of us has not felt, in the rush of temptation, the strength and help of human just sympathy when our feet were almost gone? For the Christian the sympathy of Christ was more than this. It was human, yet divine. It was as strong as it was tender. It transformed even while it stimulated the Christian's effort. No victory to which that voice summoned him in the world within or the world without was too great for him to achieve. 'I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me.'

III. But once more, the power of Christianity in the moral life consisted not only in the gift of supernatural strength and the tenderness of a personal appeal, but in the fact that it dealt with man as a social being. His regeneration was to be in and through a society; a society not of this world, for its laws, its methods, its conditions of membership were other than those with which the world was familiar. In his relation with God, man stands alone. Alone in the awful isolation of his personal responsibility, he must face death and judgment. 'No man may deliver his brother, nor make atonement unto God for him. He must let that alone for ever.' But the present age does not need to be reminded that man's nature is social, that he has necessary relations with others, that his individual life is fully realised only in relation with these, and that to seek to stand alone is to declare oneself greater or less than man. Hence,

Christianity is not cast upon the world to triumph by its own intrinsic truth and beauty. Nor are individuals, as individuals, drawn to Christ without designs to their fellow-men. The Christianity of Christ is truer to human nature than the Christianity of many Christians. For if we honestly ask ourselves, How did Christ will to give to humanity the salvation which He has wrought for it? we are bound to answer, whatever our prejudices may be, He did not write a book; He did not formulate a creed—He founded a society. He selected and trained its first members for the work they were to do, and then sent them forth to gather into the spiritual kingdom, by the power of personal influence, those who were far off, as well as those who were near, 'Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

In these days we spend so much anxious thought on the development of the Church that we are tempted to lose sight of this primary fact. Some, through fear of the mediæval view of unity, and, still more, of mediæval methods of securing it, have almost persuaded themselves that the idea of a visible society originated in the brain of S. Augustine, as the result of his controversy with the Donatists. Others who have realised the fact that the spiritual organism was not made, but grew, have been led away by the verbal argument, and, applying to it biological methods, have tried to treat structure apart from function, while a microscopic antiquarianism is offered to us as a kind of an ecclesiastical histology.

But all these questions as to what is permanent and what is transient in the organisation of the Church serve to throw into the shade the fact which lies behind them all—the fact, namely, that the Christian, just because he is a Christian, is a member of a spiritual society, of which holy baptism is the initiatory rite, the Eucharist the living bond of union, while its Magna Charta is the Sermon on the Mount. In the early days of Christianity there were no Christians unattached. But the sixteenth century revolt from the view which had been stereotyped by the mediæval Church, led by a natural reaction, in our own country especially, to a pronounced individualism, from which we are but slowly recovering. An automistic and mechanical theory of nature, the result of Cartesian and Baconian physics, had its reflex in a sophistic theory of the State, surmounted, and for a moment neutralised, by the belief in the divine right of kings. On this day, of all the days of the year, we need not be reminded of the fatal consequences of that theory in the region of politics, nor need we be surprised to find the Church struggling in vain in defence of the true view of what a society is, and falling back at last upon a religious individualism, thinly disguised under the sacred name of personal religion; while outside the Established

Church the individualistic principle was openly recognised, and the numberless religious sects are the result.

Slowly in the present day we are recovering the truth that the Church is a society, not a federation; an organic growth, not a voluntary concourse of religious atoms; that it exists in the purpose of Him who founded it, to be a moral instrument for the development in the individual man of the Christlike character, for the transformation of human nature into that which is divine.

The question which, in this day, we are called upon to answer is this. Can we sustain the Christlike character, can it even be to us a possible ideal if we no longer believe in the power which in the past has wrought out that character in saints and heroes? That power, we have seen, consists in the consciousness of a Supernatural Presence in us; in the personal relation of man with God in Christ; in the knowledge that they have communion and fellowship one with another in the divine society.

Can we, in the old age of the world, dispense with these? Will any momentum derived from a faith, which was once real to us, carry us all through that period of moral interregnum which, we are told, must precede the establishment of morals on a physical basis? There are those who confidently answer in the affirmative. And yet, perhaps, the most striking feature of the thought of our age is the sadness and the gloom which is settling down upon us. Is it an accident that it synchronises so strangely with the loss of faith? that the men who are most sure that the world has outgrown the belief in God are most instant in prophetic warnings of coming evil, most convinced that pessimism is the only reasoned conclusion from the facts? It seems as if the age were losing hope in proportion as it loses its faith. How long will charity, the third in the trinity of theological virtues, survive the rest? It is an assumption which we have no right to make, that lives of heroic self-sacrifice for others, like those of Sister Agnes Jones and Sister Dora, would have been what they were if they had not been lived in the power of faith, and hope, and love.

And if we cannot spare that belief in a Supernatural Presence as a power working with us and in us, as little can we afford to lose the power which comes from the personal relation of man with God in Christ. 'We live by admiration, hope, and love,' and these demand a personal object. As against any system which men with a true instinct stamp as mere ecclesiasticism, we appeal to the immediate personal relationship of the individual soul with God, a relationship made real and perfect by prayer and communion with Him. We appeal to it as giving power and confidence and hope to man,

enabling him to fight in the spirit of a conqueror though he were alone against the world.

And yet we dare to go beyond the point of view of those to whom the existence of a visible Church seems to imply the limiting or the destruction of personal religion. We cannot thus set brotherhood against freedom, any more than we can think of the State as the limiting rather than the expression of rights. And therefore we dare to claim that the power which Christ gave for the salvation of humanity implied, not as an accident, but as an essential, a real communion of man with man in a divine society, a *Civitas Dei*, which is not opposed to, but includes, a *Regnum Hominis*. And if in this we differ from those who are fighting nobly side by side with us in the conflict against moral evil, it is because we believe that, to maintain the doctrine of a Holy Catholic Church, is to be true to the purpose of Christ, true to human nature, true to the idea of brotherhood.

There are those who will tell us that these things are not a source of power, but of weakness in the moral life. Christianity is nowadays summoned to Canossa by the Hildebrand of non-Christian dogmatism. We are told that supernaturalism leads men to be careless of the duties of their life in the world, that personal religion easily becomes selfish, and therefore un-Christian, that the history of the Church is the record of intolerance and bigotry and exclusiveness and not of brotherhood.

How much of truth or falsehood there is in these charges, we need not now stay to inquire. In the face of history we dare not deny that Christianity has fallen very short of the purpose of its Lord. We know, too, that in the strife of warring creeds the final victory must rest with that which, whether it finds its motive power in the love of God, or solely in the service of man, yet manifests itself in the truest, the most real, most Christlike human character.

And knowing this, Christianity does not shrink from the trial. Amid the gloom of a despairing age, it dares to speak still with hope and confidence. The shadows of doubt and sadness close round us now and again. In our personal struggle with evil, or in our efforts to work for God, there comes upon us a great weariness; we are ready to fold our hands and let things go. Is it any use struggling? Must I not adopt a lower standard for myself and for others? Has not science shown me by heredity that my character is made for me at birth? Are not the laws of human development as the laws of nature? I look out into the world and I am ready to say with the prophet in Horeb, 'I only am left. Lord, they pull down Thine altars, they reject Thy truth, they will not receive the revelation of Thy Son.' And the answer comes, 'What doest Thou here?' Is it a time for solitude, and separation, and introspection, when so much

work for God is to be done? God is faithful. 'He will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able.' Temptation conquers a man only so far as he yields to it. Go back to the struggle. Do some little work for man; win some victory for God; claim all that is good and true in human life as belonging of right to Christ. Go in a strength which is not your own, to the battle which is the Lord's. It is enough that you have the command and the promise of Him whose word was with power. AUBREY MOORE.

The Gifts of the Church.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 1 CORINTHIANS xii. 4-6.

I. IF we look back upon the history of the Church we find that its main features are, in fact, the main features of the general history of mankind. The thoughts, the tendencies, the institutions of one age have not always been the thoughts, the institutions, the tendencies of the next. The basis is, no doubt, in all cases the same. 'The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord.' His life and words, as they are presented in the gospels, form a limit which Christian men cannot overpass or alter without ceasing to be Christians. So far as Christian doctrine consists in repeating those sacred words, and so far as Christian institutions have the direct appointment of the Master, variety of doctrine or variety of form is impossible. But that life and those words have suggested at various times various inferences. They have presented themselves under various aspects, according to the varying temper of an epoch or a race; just as travellers who approach a mountain on one side, and in the brightness of a morning sun, have an entirely different view from those who approach it on another side, and under a dull or stormy day.

There have been times, for example, at which the dominant temper of the Christian world has been metaphysical. The subtle distinctions between substance, matter, and essence, which no modern student of Greek philosophy has yet succeeded in precisely formulating, were at one time the common property of educated men in the Roman world.

There have been times, again, in which the prevailing temper has been mystical, in which the seen and the unseen, the present and the future, seemed to be linked together by such subtle bonds that what-

ever could be discovered about the one was an infallible clue to the other.

When either of these tempers has prevailed, the aspects under which the life and the words of Christ have presented themselves to men's minds, and the inferences which they have drawn from them, have been so different from those which we should draw in our own times, that, though we may accept them as true, we are at the same time compelled to look at many of them as being only dimly intelligible.

We in our day are passing through a different phrase. Our tendency is to seek not for substance, but for sequences, and to look not at the possible, but at the actual. When we try to interpret nature or history, our tendency is to thread facts upon ideal strings, finding a theory for all that we can read of, and a law for all that we can see. When we try to interpret Scripture our aim is to find out, not what it may mean if interpreted mystically, but what it does mean if interpreted grammatically. This, too, may be only a passing phrase, but for the time it is the dominant phrase: and we move so completely within it that former phrases have ceased not only to have an interest for us, but also to be understood. What *οὐσία* meant in the later Greek philosophy, what it meant in the metaphysics of one school as compared with another, what 'real' means in the phrase 'Real Presence,' what 'substance' means in the term transubstantiation, are questions which belong to so different a horizon from our own that few living persons are competent to express an opinion upon them. The answers to them lie, for us at least, on the other side of the great sphere of truth, of which no mortal eye can see more than one side at a time.

II. And as it has been with the aspects under which the life and words of our Lord have at various times presented themselves to men's minds, and with the inferences which have been at various times drawn from them, so it has been with the forms in which, at various times, men have tried to realise the Christian society. Those forms of organisation do not in any case rest upon an explicit divine command. If our Lord had explicitly said that every church should have its bishop and its presbyter, and that all churches should be linked together in a visible and world-wide confederation, it would have been for us Christian men not to argue, but to obey. But there is no such command. Whatever is gathered from the New Testament in regard to Christian organisation is gathered by way of inference, and in most cases of remote inference. And, as a matter of history, the organisations have varied widely, not only in any given age, but in one age as compared with another. The reflection of the Roman empire, which is visible in the post-Nicean effort at confederation,

and that of the Roman municipal system which is visible in the western provinces after the Roman empire fell, are different, not only in detail but in conception, from that kind of organisation which the Carlovingian emperors fostered, or that which became a necessity in the reformed churches of Germany.

In other words, Church history tends to establish the presumption which is raised by antecedent considerations, that in the Church, as in the world, in society in its new relation to God as in society in its old relation to God, variety is the law of life, and that ideas and institutions not only differ but are meant to be different. It does not follow that the Holy Spirit is not leading the Church into all truth because, in the vast area of human society, He shows this and that group of men only one side at a time: it does not follow that He is not shaping the form of ecclesiastical organisation, because those forms are as varied as the types of trees and flowers. On the contrary, all this variety tends to show that the Lord and Giver of the life natural is the Lord and Giver also of the life spiritual; that the infinite variety of the one is the type and symbol of the infinite variety of the other; that beneath the one, as beneath the other, varying His operations to the varying needs of men, shaping His utterances to their varied comprehensions, is the one Father and the one Spirit from whom we come and to whom we go.

When S. Paul regards the Church as a whole, he sees in it, as it were, a garden of God with many kinds of flowers, diversities of gifts and differences of operations. When he looks at the individual members of the Church the truth assumes the converse form, 'Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.' It is this personal aspect of the truth of the text which has to be insisted upon again and again, and insisted upon not less now than ever before, because now as much as ever before there is a tendency to merge the individual in the mass and to conceive of the Church as an abstraction, a vague and impalpable thing, apart from the individuals who compose it. But this converse statement of the great fact of the diversity of God's operations recalls us to the fact of our personality. One by one are we born into the world, one by one we die: and in all the solemn passage from birth to death, it is one by one that God holds communion with men and men with God. And one by one we have our work to do, that special and inalienable work, which in the economy of God none but ourselves can do. No doubt association with our fellows in the Church helps us to do it, for it gives us special means of divine comfort; it surrounds us with the sense of brotherhood; and in all this sadness of baffled effort, this monotony of daily care, this mystery of the Spirit striving with the flesh, it gives us the help and hope which comes of sympathy.

But association is a means and not an end, and for all that it can give our work is still our own. And if our work be our own, and if the work of each of us be different, then, side by side with the doing of our own work, must be the recognition of our brother's work. The task is hard, and it is one which few of us accomplish. For seeing, as we do, with our purblind eyes some little portion of the vast whole truth, we are not satisfied until other men see exactly what we see; and finding some special benefit for ourselves in some particular rules of associations, we try to impose them upon the rest of all mankind. But in that sublime catholicity, which is the correlative of the infinite diversity of the manifestation of divine life in human souls, there is no place for antagonism; and for you, especially, whose powers are fresh and who will soon have left your tutelage here to confront your life's work face to face, for you who are feeling in your souls the first stirring of spiritual energy, for you who are fired with the first and holiest enthusiasm to do something before you die for Christ and for the world, the echo of a divine message seems to stand forth clear and strong, telling you one by one, 'Do thine own work, the work of learning, the work of self-reformation, or the work of helping to govern this Church and realm; fulfil thine own ministry, the ministry of teaching, the ministry of healing, or the ministry of peace-making; use thine own gift, thy gift of enthusiasm, thy gift of sympathy, or thy gift of the sense of beauty. What place that work and ministry of thine will have in the mighty whole, it is not for thee to know; it is not for thy dim eyes to see the vast proportions of the temple of living stones which the Master-builder has planned; it is not for thy dull ears to hear the innumerable chords of that vast harmony which is for ever rising from the manifold creation. Let thy care be only lest the manifestation of the Spirit which is given to thee be profitless, lest the place which thou wast destined to fill be a blank, and lest the eternal harmony be, for all that thou hast done, a silence and a discord. E. HATCH.

The Perfect Witness.

The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God.
ROMANS viii. 16.

THE work, the inspiration, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, which is the doctrine upon which our thoughts are fixed by the recurrence of Whitsunday, is beyond all question the consummate doctrine of Christianity; it is the coping-stone, as it were, of that mighty arch of revelation which spans the universe of God.

Search the New Testament for all that it says about this truth, and you will be astonished at the immense space which it occupies. The one wholly unimagined and unsurpassable truth which the gospel brought to light was the presence of God within us through the work of Christ. The Jews knew that God was over them, the Apostles knew that our Lord Jesus Christ was Emmanuel, God with them; it was reserved to the first Pentecost, the first Whitsunday, that they should realise what was meant by God being within them.

Christ had Himself told them that it was expedient for them that He should go away; because only by the departure of His bodily presence could they realise His spiritual presence; only by His earthly leaving them could He send them 'another Comforter,' who should be, not only with them, but in them. Have you ever realised the force of those words, 'expedient,' advantageous, profitable for the heart-broken disciples that their dear Lord should leave them? Could it have been deemed possible? What would not we sacrifice, we perhaps sometimes at least think, but for one hour of the golden days of Galilee and of Nazareth? Should we not be willing to die to-morrow if only for this one day we could grasp the hand of the living Christ, listen to His voice, sit at His feet, prostrate ourselves in the dust before Him, cry for His grace and mercy? Then we should feel that there was One who could rightly understand us. Do we not feel sure that then we should have been heard, saved, strengthened? should we not then, at least, have seen one specimen of what man may be amid the wreck, and waste, and ruin of what man is? The feeling is quite natural, and yet have we forgotten that hundreds, nay thousands, of people in that day, lordly priests, religious Pharisees, publicans, women, artizans, beggars, the sick, the whole, the righteous, the unrighteous, the self-righteous, did see Christ daily, and cared nothing for the privilege? Has it never struck us that we may be not only as near to Christ, but much more near to Him now. Do we believe His own distinct statement that He went away for the purpose, not of being further from us, but of being nearer to us, much nearer than then? He is near, even one with us, to an extent which then He could not be when He lived on earth. If you believe His own words, you must believe that this professed desire to see and hear Him, if it be not our hypocrisy, which indeed it is not, is at least something of the materialism which clings to us sinners. He has told us that by the Spirit we may be closer to Him than if, like Peter, we could grasp His hand with tears, or, like the beloved John, could lay our head upon His breast; for now is fulfilled the promise, 'If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me.' In old days the Jews could see, as the visible symbol of God's presence among

them, the splendid temple of marble and gold; the Apostles knew that the life of the temple of God was the living temple of God's Godhead. Now we are the temples of the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in us.

Let us confine ourselves to the apprehension of this central truth of Whitsunday. The truth is that we are children of God. The twofold witness is within us and without us; it is the witness of our human spirit; it is the corroborative witness of the Holy Spirit of God.

I. What do we mean by our spirit? The human spirit is the highest element of human nature. Scripture analyses all our human nature into the three elements of body, soul, and spirit. Not, emphatically not in his body does man find the witness that we are children of God. It is not, indeed, as the verse is quite misrendered in our Authorised Version, it is not a 'vile body.' God did not create us in a vile body, but it is, as S. Paul says, when correctly rendered, 'the body of our humiliation.' It is not, as the ascetics and mystics thought, a fetter or a prison-house, or a thing to blush for. When it is redeemed, it may be gloriously ennobled, it may be a splendid or hallowed instrument of righteousness; it may be a radiant and holy temple of the Divine. But it can never be this by virtue of itself, but only by virtue of something without and above itself. The life of the body by itself is carnal; it is a life of the flesh, a life of corruption, a life of sin and death. And, just as the body by itself bears no witness that we are children of God, so neither does the soul. The body of itself is like a witness who, when questioned, is too boorish and corrupt even to understand the question put to him; the soul in this lower sense is like a bribed and conceited witness who wilfully gives false evidence. Far from saying, 'Ye are children of God,' the soul in this lower sense insolently says to us, 'Ye are gods,' and then with its serpent witness it feeds the intellect, inflating it with spurious aspirations, and, the body gorging itself with the corrupting fruits of death, untruthful is the witness, false is the tempting whisper, brief is the illusion, terrible is the awakement. Neither, then, in our bodies nor in our souls can we find the testimony that we desire. If we listen to them we shall be told, and be told by all those who accept their witness, we shall be told that we ourselves are accidents, perishing beasts, mistakes of God's creation, nothing but the feeble vassals of lust and hunger, material products of blind, impersonal, passionless forces, machines determined by the irresistible compulsion of heredity. This in one form or another is the issue arrived at by every form of such philosophy, and its moral effects have been, and whatever glozing books may say, always will be, for the multidude, infinitely disastrous.

WHITSUNDAY

There is no lesson so deadly that the soul will not teach us. It will persuade men who live to the flesh and not to the spirit that God is a tradition of the nursery, that Christ was no more than a prophet of Nazarath, that love has no meaning but lust, that virtue is only a name for refined selfishness, that existence itself is a blunder, that this is the worst of all possible worlds, that man is merely what he eats, that every human being is wholly lustful and bad and untrustworthy, that annihilation is the only possible remedy for a race supremely and irrevocably evil. The witness of man's body only degrades him into a perishing animal, the witness of his soul only elevates him into an incarnate fiend. How different is the witness of man's spirit! It is the one divine, eternal, incorruptible element of His being. The spirit tells us that we are children of God, that we are heirs of immortality: it bids us lift up our eyes to the immeasurable azure vault above us, and to see that we were not made in vain; it makes us temples which, like the ancient temples, are lighted from above, temples of which the light is the light of God Himself. The spirit teaches each man that he is highly ransomed and ennobled to a filial relationship with God, and therefore fit to do all the noblest things; it bids him

> 'Unfold the wings within him wrapped, and proudly rise,
> Redeemed from earth, a creature of the skies.'

It is only when man listens to this witness, cherishes this teaching of the Spirit, that he can live a pure and happy life, thinking noble thoughts of God, and doing noble deeds to man. I need not prove that it does so. You know it. It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

II. You cannot say that you do not hear the witness of the Spirit within you, for all hear it, or, at least, all have heard it. Yet it is possible for any one of us to quench the Spirit within us, contaminate it we cannot, for it is divine; but obliterate it, strangle its voice, destroy, extinguish it within us, we may. We are doing so often by slow degrees, we are selling ourselves to do evil, if we are living and giving ourselves up to any form of unholy living. And when a man ceases to be a spirit he ceases properly to be a man, he becomes 'earthly, sensual, devilish.' If we live after the flesh, if we do the deeds of the body, we, that is our spirit, dies; if we neglect our spiritual being it dies. It is a law of nature that every faculty grows by use and perishes by neglect. Only when we try to live to the spirit do we feel the witness of the spirit, do we discern the things of the Spirit, do the things of the body gradually die, and the things of the spirit live and grow in us. And then, hearing this witness ever louder and clearer, we cannot live a base, mean, carnal life. Your body is not

you; it is but the machine you use; it is but the house you live in. Make it an instrument of righteousness, make it a temple of God. Your soul, your intellect, your emotions and passions are not yourself. Control, give them a right direction; so will you not only know but find out by personal experience what is the meaning of the gift of Pentecost. For then the witness from within will be uttered as with infinite reverberation by the witness from without, the Spirit of God will bear witness with your spirit, nay, the Spirit of God will become more and more your spirit, it will be your spirit, it will dwell in you as your spirit, until at last, in unity with Christ, you, too, can exclaim with His most glorious Apostle, and not merely regard it as a burst of fanatical rapture, but sober truth, 'It is no more I that live, but Christ that liveth in me.'

III. To conclude, then, we have seen what our spirits are, and what the Spirit of God is; and that when we live the spiritual life our spirits become the reflections and the irradiation of the Spirit of God within us. And what is the sublime truth to which testimony is thus borne coincidently by the Spirit of God and by our spirit? It is nothing less than this, that we are children of God. 'Behold,' says S. John, 'what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!' we creatures of dust, crushed before the moth, passing in this brief transient existence between two dark eternities, we whose life is but a dream when one awaketh, we who are so often abject and unworthy of ourselves, that we should be called the children of God. Think of it. It does, indeed, mean a religion. It is not like so many forms of Atheism, a religion of mire, but a religion which can raise us, if we will realise it, to undefined nobleness, and inspire us with immeasurable hope. 'The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.' 'Behold, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.'

DEAN FARRAR.

A Mission and a Promise.

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me. Acts i. 8.

I. FOR the forty days between His Resurrection and His Ascension our Lord 'spake with His disciples the things concerning the kingdom of God.' Those forty days were days emphatically of missionary discourse. The kingdom which He had to set up, the

laws, the growth, the development of that kingdom, the trials, the difficulties, the temptations which would beset His disciples were the subjects on which He dwelt. Above all, He reminded them of their duty; again and again He insisted upon it, again and again He laid upon them His charge and commanded them to fulfil it: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature'; 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'; repentance and remission of sins must be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; 'Ye shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem and Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth.' Thus He charged them, thus He gave them their work and bound it upon their consciences. But with the work He gave also the promise which should be the strength of its fulfilment: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age. Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you. Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.' In this power we know they laboured; in this power they triumphed. The joy of the Ascension filled their hearts even before the effusion of the Pentecostal gift, as it were a blessed foretaste of that which is to come; and the first great missionary work of the Church is summed up in these words: 'And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.'

What was the power by which they wrought, and by which, as we know, they changed the face of the world? Those poor despised fishermen and peasants, those men who had been so dull of understanding, and so fearful, and so easily scared out of their convictions, how came they to be all at once so full of wisdom and courage? What was the power that animated them? It was not the power of knowledge miraculously imparted, for they were still unlearned and ignorant men; nor was it the power of eloquence, for they were rude of speech; it was not the power of wealth or rank, for they had neither; nor was it the power of ecclesiastical position, or political authority, for these were against them; but it was power from on high; it was the power of the Holy Ghost; it was the power of the fire within, the power first which illuminated their understanding and elevated their affections, and gave them a truer knowledge of their Lord, which convinced them as they had never been convinced before of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; it was a power to resist and overcome the wicked one; to testify mightily to others of a Christ loved, obeyed, followed; and so as a power burning within, it was a power irresistible without, protecting the hearts and consciences of those who heard the preacher, a power that none of their adversaries were able to gainsay or resist.

II. So it was in the first age of the Church. Is it so now? We are told, and told with a calm assurance which is not seldom imposing, that all this is a thing of the past. Whatever might have been the facts in the early diffusion of Christianity, whatever the power which then enabled the missionaries of Christ to subdue the world, this power, we are assured, has departed now. Like many other impulses, strong at first, it has faded away. There was then a mighty enthusiasm kindled in the hearts of Christ's disciples, a loyal attachment to His person to which there has been no parallel since. Every man became a preacher, every life was a sermon. Belief was so vivid, the sense of communion with a risen Christ so clear and certain, the conviction so strong that they could do all things through Christ who strengthened them, it is no wonder that the world admired and yielded to the influence. The records of that first success are indisputable, but it is mere fanaticism, men say, to expect such success now. To embark on any such enterprise now, to suppose that the world can be converted now as it was then, is to misread history and to misunderstand the facts of life. The old enthusiasm is gone; the old gospel has lost its power. The age needs other influences and other motives. Our method, we are assured, is wrong, and there is abundant evidence of its failure. Our method, we are told, is wrong, for what the world needs is something else. It needs not the gospel of Christ, not the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation, but the gospel of progress, the gospel of civilisation, the gospel of a self-regenerating humanity. The gospel which suits men now is a gospel which flatters their pride by telling them that they need no Saviour, or that they can save themselves, and that they can do so by means of the enlightenment which is spreading fast around, and by those lessons of self-restraint, those maxims of worldly prudence which are the fruit of modern progress, and upon which all sensible men are pretty well agreed. If the world is to be made better these are the influences we must employ; we must civilise first, and then we may Christianise afterwards if we please. The gospel of culture is the gospel of the nineteenth century. But the missionaries by whom the world has been redeemed from barbarism and from degradation have indeed been men not void of culture, sometimes men of no common attainments; but they have been first, and before all things else, men of faith, and men who have clasped the Cross to their hearts, who have 'counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord'; it was thence they drew their inspiration This was the secret of their power. It is these men who have been witnesses to Christ, who have changed the face of the world; it is the men who have unfurled the banner of the Cross, who have carried with them the literature, the science, the art which have made life richer,

sweeter, more noble. 'The gospel is the power of God unto salvation.' First it begins with the facts of human nature; it deals with man as a sinner; it tells him of an atonement for sin, of the Son of God made Flesh, living, dying, rising again to bring man nearer to God. It tells of the Holy Spirit given by the risen Christ to dwell in every heart not wilfully shut against His blessed influence; a fountain of a new life imparting the power to overcome sin, sanctifying body, soul, and spirit, and restoring in man, however degraded and defiled, the obliterated image of God.

And from this beginning all else flows. Wherever this one work of regeneration and sanctification has taken place, the man looks on the world around him with new eyes. It is a world in which his Father works; it is a world which the blood of the Cross has hallowed; it is a world wherein the Spirit of God is building up the glorious habitation of His Church. Will not such a man have the true inspiration which gives to all things around him their proper dignity and their real glory? In the train of faith, and meekness, and love, and purity, and all the graces of the Spirit there will come science with her searching eye, and poetry with her glowing tongue, and art with her magic pencil; and thus the same power which has made human life sweet and pure and holy will also make it rich with all the varied culture, and noble with a sense of the dignity of its calling. Thus the gospel of Jesus Christ gives all that your modern culture demands, and gives with it what no culture ever gave, peace of conscience, purity of heart, self-sacrificing love.

BISHOP PEROWNE.

The World for God.

And He called the twelve together, and He sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God. S. LUKE. IX. 12.

THE spiritual world, like the globe on which we tread, is not built up by great cataclysms and conflagrations; far more by long, silent ages of upheaval and depression, by the silting of the great rivers and the toil of the coral insect and the immemorial toil of countless trillions of animalculæ. Churches, although they may have their sudden resurrections and Pentecostal outpourings, are created by the unhasting, unresting, all but imperceptible activities of the providence of Him who is patient because He is eternal. Nevertheless, as by the first glimmer of the dawn the darkness is dispersed, and the crimson speck on the mountain peak is broadened into a river of gold, and we look again and it is day, so the Son of

righteousness is rising upon nation after nation 'with healing in His wings,' and like that mystic water swelling gradually from the ankles to the knees, from the knees till it became water to swim in, a river which could not be passed over; even so the great wave of the grace of God has covered isle after isle in its infinite embrace. It is an utterly false and ignorant assertion to say, as was once said by a noble duke in the House of Lords, that 'Christian missions are a disastrous failure.' They are not and never have been a failure! In proportion to our attenuated and spasmodic efforts they are an immense and almost miraculous success. But for our spiritual indifference and our moral unworthiness they would ere long cover the whole earth 'with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.'

I. For what, in a few words, is the history of the Christian propaganda? It began with one hundred and twenty poor Galileans, secretly gathered in an upper room, and preaching a Messiah crucified between two robbers. What does it mean to-day? It means to-day the faith of some three hundred millions of all the greatest and the noblest of the human race. That despised faith conquered the Romans, it conquered the barbarians, it conquered nearly the whole civilised world of ancient days. And the total result is that whereas at the beginning of the fourth century after Christ probably only one man out of every hundred and fifty in the human race was a Christian, now it is probable that were the whole human race to sweep past us in its long yet brief procession between the darkness of the two eternities, nearly one in every three would own the Holy Name by which we are called. That is the bright and the encouraging side. The dark and mysterious side, the side which proves that it is part of God's providence for man to do his work for man, and that man too commonly and too shamefully neglects it, is that if we number the whole living mass of the children of men roughly at thirteen hundred millions, it is reckoned that one-eighth of those are still fetish-worshippers; that one hundred and sixty millions are Brahmins; that one hundred and fifty millions are Mohammedans; that five hundred millions are Buddhists; that in spite of all the splendid work which has been done, in spite of the vast growth of Christianity in Japan, in Melanesia, in New Zealand, in Fiji, in Hindustan, in China, in North and South America, from the bleak coasts of Hudson's Bay to the rain-swept desolation of Tierra del Fuego, in spite of the fact that this our Victorian era has been the most splendid era in the re-awakenment of missionary enterprise since time began, yet from the natural growth of population the number of heathen are probably increasing and not decreasing in the world. If we feel any love for our brother man for whom Christ died, if we

attach any value to the 'day-spring from on high' which has dawned on us, if there be in our heart the faintest pulse of pity for the benighted and the perishing, are we not bound by every consideration of duty, by every touch of compassion, by every impulse of generosity, to fulfil the command and final behest of Him who died and rose again for us, to 'go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature'?

II. Why are the marks of our restless enterprise visible in every land? Why is the ocean dotted with the white sails of our ships and furrowed by their numberless white wakes, which are the true avenues to our palace front? Why have we been permitted to turn the expansive vapour into one giant and all-powerful flame, to seize the lightning by its wings of fire and bid it obediently flash our humblest message round the girdled globes, through tunnelled mountains and the abysses of stormy seas? Let us not mistake our true strength and our true destiny. It is not to be the accumulators of the world's riches, or the carriers of its burdens, or the manufacturers of its goods; it is not to be the beasts of burden, but to be the evangelists of the world. Our greatness is not in our iron or our gold, our flaming furnaces, our vast factories, our irresistible fleets, our all-conquering guns, it is in our true manhood in Christ Jesus, it is in the righteousness of our national character, it is in our faithfulness to the high mission which God, by every indication of His Providence, has so visibly imposed upon us. God's voice has called us, God's finger has beckoned to us, God's hands of invisible consecration have been laid upon our heads. Christ bids us arise and win the world for Him. If we neglect this high duty for meaner, baser, and more selfish aims, if we worship not God but gold, the day will assuredly come when the lamp of our Churches will be fatally extinguished among the seven golden candlesticks, and our cities become like those seven of Asia, whose sites are ruins, whose marble is decay, and their inscriptions devastation. 'I know not,' says an eloquent orator, 'how far the commerce or conquests of a country might be unaffected by the loss of its Christianity; but this I know, that God's blessing could no longer rest on its victories or accompany its trades, and, therefore, that if its armies triumphed, the triumph would be virtual defeat, and that if its ships were richly freighted it would be with fruits which, like the fabled fruit from the Dead Sea shores, turns to ashes in the mouth.' Come anything rather than this; come barrenness into our soil; come discord into our councils; come treason into our camps; come wreck into our navies: but if we cease to be a righteous and God-fearing people, it is fatal to the true glory and dignity of England. The vineyard of time will be taken from us, and will be given to others who will bring forth its fruits in their season. If we

value for ourselves the gospel of the living God we shall feel it a solemn national duty to extend its benefits to others; if we do neither, the history of all other nations tells us that in our case also the foundations of our greatness will be sapped, the bulwarks of our liberty will be shaken, the springs of our peace will be poisoned, the sources of our prosperity will be dried up. Let us forget these duties and our glory will fade, as another statesman said, like the Tyrian dyes, and moulder like the Venetian palaces, and the coming generations will have to add our name to those countries whose religious decline has been at once the prelude and the cause of their national overthrow.

DEAN FARRAR.

The Spirit of Truth.

He will guide you into all truth. S. JOHN xvi. 13.

IT is a magnificent promise. It opens a boundless vista to the imagination. It addresses that which is noblest and purest in our nature. And yet the promise has its limitation. Not only is there the obvious limitation of the capacity of the recipient; not only is the guidance promised of the Spirit of God, so that there must be submission to His teaching if we are to ascertain what truth is; but there is a limitation even of the object of this truth of which Christ came to be the revealer—this truth in all its verity, compass, and power, breadth of application, but nevertheless the truth of which Christ was the revealer. He says of Himself, 'I am the truth,' but He makes even that declaration with special reference to His mission from the Father: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.' So again He lays down very plainly, in these great closing discourses to His disciples, what is the nature of that truth into which the Spirit is to guide them. It is not secular truth, it is not truth in art, or in science, or in natural philosophy; it is not even religious truth in a vague, undetermined sense, but it is truth concerning Christ Himself: 'He shall glorify Me. He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you. He shall testify of Me; whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak.'

I. How was this guidance accomplished? how was the promise fulfilled in the Apostles? how has it been fulfilled in the Church of Christ ever since? How was it with the Apostles first of all? It was strictly a guidance, no doubt. No doubt there did come upon them a sudden mysterious overpowering illumination in the first Pentecostal gift, but that was the beginning, not the completion, of their spiritual life. It had many stages in its development heavenward. The pre-

judices which yet remained in the mind of Peter, the strife between Peter and Paul, the confession of Paul himself long years after his baptism, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect,' are evidences that, so far as the sanctification of the individual was concerned, the work was gradual and progressive, a leading into the truth, not a sudden infallible instruction once for all. And even as regards the interpretation of the Christian mysteries, the revelation of the manifold wisdom of God, we cannot tell how far these may have kept pace with their inner progress in holiness. Only this we know, that it reached its perfection in the inspired writings of the Apostles. The divine guidance vouchsafed to them was not for themselves alone, but that through them the whole Church might be enriched, enlightened, and sanctified.

Yet even here we see that the disclosure was anything but systematic or formal. If the whole necessary truth was taught, it was not taught at once; neither was it taught to one man. This we may surely regard as evidence of the manifold wisdom of God, that, if there be but one Spirit, there are diversities of operations. Not only does the work of the Spirit leave the natural powers in each Apostle free and unfettered, not only does each writer preserve his individuality unimpaired, but each has his own method of setting forth the truth. How far better it is to recognise this than to try to force all the writers of the New Testament into some mechanical agreement! S. Paul, the Apostle of faith; S. Peter, the Apostle of hope; S. John, the Apostle of love; S. James, the Apostle of Christian morality—how infinitely better and truer it is to recognise that each of these has his special work to do in the building up of the Church, that each beheld a portion, an aspect, of the truth, of which he was made the prophet of the Church, than to suppose that each one possessed all the truth, and weary ourselves in paring down or perverting their language to make one portion fit into another! S. Paul teaches a righteousness without works; S. John says, 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous.' S. Paul says, 'Abraham was justified by faith'; S. James says he was justified by works.

II. This teaching of the truth, this divine guidance and illumination has, indeed, been carried on by methods which the Church has often been slow to recognise. The Church owes much to them that are without. The Spirit of God has wrought in harmony with the providence of God. It is not only by the inward sanctification of the members of the Church, not only by the larger grace vouchsafed to them, not only by his witness in their hearts leading them to Christ, transforming them into His image, in perfecting His work, that their guidance into the truth is accomplished, but by other ways does He carry on His work. In all the conflicts which the Church has had to entertain

with errorsome truth has emerged with greater brightness from the conflict. The doctrine of the Incarnation, the reality and perfection of the two natures (the human and the Divine) in the one person of Christ the Lord, the fact (if not the meaning) of the Atonement, His Resurrection, His Ascension into heaven, His mediatorial priesthood, the Divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost—these are truths which have become the common heritage of Christians. In a word, the Catholic faith in its main outlines has been established, although we may hesitate to insist upon the subtle definitions of theologians or to fence ourselves about with the thorny spikes of scholastic distinctions.

III. Lastly, let us not forget that if this guidance has thus been perpetuated through all periods of the Church's history, it has been extended to all portions of the Church. 'Wheresoever His Church is,' says Irenæus, 'there is the Spirit of the Lord; wheresoever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the Church.' We must not dare to narrow the Pentecostal gifts. If one Church presumes, with her impious claims to infallibility, virtually to deny the presence of the Holy Ghost except within her own pale, we may well shudder at any approach to such wickedness. 'If,' to use the language of a great preacher of our Church, 'she would imprison the Holy Ghost, making Him a prisoner and a slave to Christ's Vicar, and shut Him up in the close imprisonment of the breast and bosom of one man, that Bishop, and claiming His divine guidance for all the tyrannous oppressions and arrogant perversions of truth of which that Church has been guilty, she would come near to the unpardonable sin. Let us see to it that we be not drawn into any likeness to such an error.' Wherever there is goodness, purity, faith, there is the Spirit of the Lord; it matters not what our ecclesiastical organisations may be. No man has the whole truth; no Church adequately presents the whole truth; but all who are under the guidance of the Spirit of truth He is leading into 'all truth.' 'I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.' Let us be on the watch to recognise, gladly to recognise, truth wherever it is to be found. Let us honour it, even though it be uttered by one whom some portion of the Church brands as a schismatic or a heretic. The Spirit of truth is the Spirit of love, and when we have learned to confess that He dwells in and sanctifies the whole body of the Church and that all are part of the Church, then we shall begin to profit by His teaching as we ought. But if we would imprison Him in any ecclesiastical system, we may have a sickly, warped, stunted theology which we presumptuously label 'the Catholic faith'; we shall not walk in the light and liberty of the sons of God, children of truth, children of our Father, knowing Him and loving Him as the Father of us all. BISHOP PEROWNE.

WHITSUNDAY

The Connection between Faith in the Ascended Christ and the Sanctifying Power of Christianity.

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. Acts ii. 32, 33.

I. WITHOUT faith all our conviction of the elevating power of Christianity will certainly be wanting in earnestness and truth. Many had already spoken of these things before Christ came into the world, but the mere speaking of it brought no conviction; facts, proofs were necessary, and He alone has given them. It will be just the same with the sanctifying power of Christianity. Men say that it brings consolation, tranquillity to men, in a peculiar manner. We will not deny that such a consolation really belongs to it, and he who is obliged to do without it cannot think of real sanctification. We will not dispute this either, that Christianity is a source of consolation. The Lord Himself says, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted' (S. Matt. v. 4.). He called the weary and heavy laden to Himself and promised them rest (S. Matt. xi. 28), and He has kept His word. From the beginning the Word of God has belonged to the afflicted and distressed, and brought them consolation; it has clung to men wherever there was sadness and deep necessity. When we are in need of comfort we go to Christ; those also who formerly did not need Him, who thought that there was so much consolation in the world that there was no need of this doubtful one, when the hour of need comes, go straight to Him, and ask whether He has not a word of consolation for them also. But we must again ask, in what does that consolation consist? Certainly, those elevating convictions of which we spoke are comforting. Certainly, as there is nothing more elevating, there can be nothing more comforting than faith in God, in a heaven, and our being destined for it; and if we really confess this truth, then there is no doubt we have consolation enough to be sufficient for all sufferings. But when we look at ourselves, at God, and the heaven which He has opened for us, it cannot be comforting to be obliged to say, during the exaltation, which these thoughts have afforded us: but you must renounce this; you are a sinner, there is no consolation for you, because there is no place for you in heaven. How much you have already worked upon yourself in vain, and have undertaken a thousand things in order to improve yourself! That is no consolation! How does it happen that there is, nevertheless, consolation in Christianity?

You will again remind me of the word of the Lord which He also directed to sinners, and which tells us that sinners also may be saved. When He assures us of this, we can believe it; but from the same mouth proceed also the most earnest declarations, that where there is sin, there cannot be salvation, and that the holy God can have no fellowship with sinners as sinners; and so long as we stand perplexed between Jesus and our sins, how can we find access there? But we know where the key is: in this, that Jesus has, by His death, established a reconciliation for the sins of the world. Therefore those elevating convictions in Christianity are so consoling, because hand in hand with them goes the certainty of the reconciliation.

II. What is it which gives us impulses to good? We are pointed to the example and word of the Redeemer. Certainly, who would not, if he heard the word of the Lord, feel an incentive within him, and at the sight of this perfect, pure, and Holy One feel himself impelled to seek after good? We are pointed to divine love, through which the inward peace, the consolation of God, comes into the sinner's heart. Will not this love be before all an incitement to good, to love God, to love again, after we have first been loved by Him? But all that is not yet sufficient; one thing is still wanting. a confidence that the striving will be successful. We must remain long in want of this if we can reckon on no other power than our own. Only when we unite with our own a higher power which does the best, can a result be intelligently hoped for, and Christianity gives this conviction. But now we will earnestly ask our opponents this question, How do you know that Christianity gives us this power? They say, that it is the holy promise of this Jesus. But let us consider this: the Lord promises us assistance from above, but how does He then describe it? He calls Himself this assistance, and His Holy Spirit is to take care of the goodness in the world; He will be the higher power that is with us in all good things. And how can this promise prove effectual, if this Christ is nothing more than a human prophet, who once lived and then died, if He who certainly visibly withdrew Himself from our gaze does not nevertheless live among us, and pour out His Spirit over the earth, and, holding everything in His hand, promote goodness? We can therefore only found this confidence on faith in the ascended Saviour.

We often complain of the incomplete practical effect of Christianity; this is caused by want of a living faith in the ascended Christ; here is one chief cause of all the incompleteness. Oh, would to God that it were otherwise, then we should have a Christianity rich in results! Let us strive to win again full faith in the ascended Christ —in the Christ whom Scripture shows us, who fashioned the world anew, in whom nothing can be changed now and for ever, either by

human wisdom or by human foolishness, who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. R. ROTHE.

The Work of the Holy Spirit.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. S. JOHN iii. 8.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ROMANS viii. 14.

THESE utterances of our blessed Lord and of S. Paul tell us as much as we can ever expect to formulate in words with regard to the work of the Holy Spirit, its secret, mysterious operations, its undoubted and marvellous effect. Week by week, perhaps day by day, we repeat, as Christians, our confession of belief in the reality of the Spirit of God, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' We admit thereby our belief in the reality of that spiritual world which we can neither touch, nor see, nor define; which science has neither voice to describe, nor processes to explore; which Revelation itself can only present to us by analogy and figure, with large demand upon that spiritual faculty of faith by which alone we can apprehend spiritual things. We believe in the Spirit of God and in the spiritual world; but the moment that we scrutinise either our own consciousness or the words of Scripture for some more exact definition of the Holy Spirit, or of its work in our hearts, we are disappointed. So it was at the first, and so it must always be. Nicodemus asks for explanation of the figure 'born of the Spirit.' He is answered by the analogy of the viewless wind, the breeze that springs up on a summer day, we know not whence, and blows so softly that it is hard to trace its direction, while its presence is betrayed only by rustling leaves and gentle sighing in the air. S. Paul can find no clearer or more comprehensive phrase in which to express to the Christians at Rome the result to be expected from the indwelling of the Spirit in their hearts than that they will become the 'sons of God,' co-heirs with Christ of all the spiritual blessings which His sufferings, Death, and glorious Resurrection have secured. It is all mysterious, this existence and work of the Holy Spirit, and yet it is intensely real. We cannot see it or touch it or define it; yet surely we can no more deny its existence than we can deny the reality of the wind that blows. Nor, so long as there are human hearts to struggle and to suffer, to sin and to repent, can we deny that there is some mysterious power at work, call it what name you will; some power external to ourselves, yet working

in our inmost heart; something supernatural, above the grasp of our natural faculties, yet dealing with, moulding and guiding those faculties to supernatural and spiritual ends. We may dispute the point of view of S. John and of S. Paul; we may question the correctness or criticise the vagueness of their language; but we cannot deny that what they call the 'Spirit of God' is a reality that answers alike to the analogies of nature and to the experience of man.

I. It would be interesting, were this the time and place, to trace the various attempts that have been made, without the guidance of revelation, to give definite shape to the dimly-felt reality of spiritual operations in the hearts of men. We see them in the wild imaginations of Oriental religions, or in the creations of Pagan poetry and philosophy; in doctrines of an *Anima Mundi* inspiring human loves and fears, or in Gnostic speculations about the emanations from the Supreme Being; in well-known classical legends of the power that 'inspires the pale-eyed priest from his prophetic cell' at Delphi or Dodona; in Virgil's picture of the Sibyl tossing wildly in her cave, to shake off the power that possessed her; in every strange wild tale of supernatural possession that has sprung from ignorance and credulity. All these, however, are but 'dim and broken lights' of that great truth to which the Christian Church bears witness on this day, the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men; the only 'supernatural possession,' which reason and revelation alike confirm; the gracious gift by God to men His creatures, of a Guide and Comforter amid the dangers and troubles of their life on earth. The Spirit of God is a mystery; His action in us is a mystery; and these mysteries are so far above the grasp of human faculties or the descriptive powers of human language, that the Church in her teaching upon this day and on Trinity Sunday cannot but employ conceptions and terms which are incapable of precise analysis, against which it is easy to bring charges either of vague anthropomorphism, or of idle metaphysical subtlety. We may ask, 'What is this Holy Spirit? how shall we discern Him? how define Him?' We may search the Scriptures, but we shall find no distinct answer to such a question, no scientific statement of what the Holy Spirit is, or what He does. But we shall find this, an assurance that we may know Him, if Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, and if we are content to accept from His lips the promise of His presence with us by His Holy Spirit, though we can neither understand nor define the manner of that presence and the nature of that Spirit, that Spirit of whom we speak as of a 'Person,' using such language as seems to come nearest to our Lord's own utterances, but neither pretending nor expecting that we have cleared up the mystery that must still remain when human speech has done its utmost to indicate the nature of God.

II. But to those who are thus content to admit their own ignorance, and to believe in the reality of spiritual mysteries beyond the power of human understanding to grasp or human language to express; to those who are content to sit in faith and love at the feet of Jesus, there comes, if Revelation be studied rightly, a flood of spiritual light upon the nature and work of that Spirit of truth, whom 'the world (*i.e.* unaided human knowledge) cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but, says Jesus to the spiritually minded, 'Ye know Him, for He dwelleth in you, and shall be in you.' Wherever the Holy Spirit acts upon our life, there we meet with a promise that we shall find Him. Whatever is needed to help us to reverence Him, worship Him, obey Him, that is revealed to us. When Christ is going away, and His disciples' hearts sink within them, to them comes the revelation that when our Guide is gone, another will come, a Comforter to bring peace and consolation, a Teacher to bring all things to their remembrance within the secret chambers of the heart, a Spirit of truth to guide them into all truth.

The Holy Spirit of God must be looked for and realised, if it is to be realised at all, in our own hearts. There, and there alone, can the presence of Christ be felt; there, and there alone, does any reasonable interpretation of His own words lead us to expect that He will make Himself known to us. The gift of the Spirit to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost was, no doubt, accompanied by outward signs and by the communication of new powers; and we see by what happened then, and by S. Paul's allusions to the 'gifts of grace' bestowed upon the early Church, that some such external sign of the grace of God was necessary for that time. But even S. Paul, after enumerating the 'spiritual gifts' bestowed in varying measure upon the Church, gifts of speaking with tongues, prophecy, healing, and the like, goes on to show a 'more excellent way' than these, in the grace of charity or Christian love, that grace without which all other gifts are nothing, which fadeth not nor faileth, which is the seal of faith and the groundwork of hope. The well-known description of charity or love in 1 Corinthians 13 is the sketch of a heart filled with the Spirit of God; whose works and the signs of whose presence are inward and not outward. Nor is there anything in the Acts of the Apostles or the Apostolical Epistles to indicate that the peculiar manifestations of God's Spirit to the Apostolic Church were other than a temporary provision, 'childish things,' leading up to the things of a man, the partial vision of the outward senses preparatory to the fully developed perfection of the inward eye and ear. It is only natural, therefore, that all subsequent attempts to induce men to look for outward and material evidences of the presence of God's

Spirit, rather than to the inward evidence of the conscience illumined by faith, have failed in the object for which, doubtless with the best of motives, they were designed. Such superstitious fictions, for examples, as transubstantiation in its literal sense, or the miraculous powers ascribed to senseless relics, fictions which bring down the pure and lofty teaching of Jesus Christ to the level of a debasing idolatry, may have had effects upon the fear or ignorance of men which for a time have been mistaken for great spiritual success; but they have all along been foredoomed to failure as a false and degraded copy of those 'childish things' which even while S. Paul wrote were passing away. Or, to turn to an opposite pole of Christian teaching and practice, the ecstatic excitement, which in so-called Revivalist movements has been claimed for sufficient evidence of conversion and the presence of the Holy Spirit, has very seldom indeed been the index of permanent effect upon the soul. It has borne a superficial resemblance to the gifts bestowed upon the early Christians. The gift of tongues, for instance, may have been a kind of ecstatic utterance; but it has been of little more real value than the frenzied possession which Pagan thought ascribed to oracle or Sibyl,

> 'whose voice or hideous hum
> Rang through the arched roof in words deceiving.'

If anything were wanted to confirm the teaching of Christ Himself upon the mystery of His communion with us by His Spirit, it would be found abundantly in the history of the Christian faith. Experience and the voice of Scripture agree to prove that the work of the Holy Spirit is to be traced and felt in the depths of the human soul and in the voice of the individual conscience. Its effects, of course, will be visible in a Christian life; but the *modus operandi*, by which the character is so spiritualised as to produce goodness and holiness, remains unseen. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.'

III. We have dwelt thus far upon the reality and the mystery of the Holy Spirit and His operation; let us think for a moment of its infinite variety. Every thought, every faculty, every opportunity, is a field for the Spirit's influence, and may be spiritualised by His indwelling and guiding presence. Not in one set of ideas and thoughts, not in one line of conduct alone, not even necessarily in one particular type of creed, are we to look for the presence and the grace of the Holy Spirit. 'He that is not against us is on our part,' said Jesus Himself of one who had tried to do good but 'followed not' the

Master and His disciples; and this thought of the infinite variety of the Holy Spirit's work in men's hearts may remind us to see good in, and to welcome, its effects in the good works and blameless lives of men who follow not after us; whose 'views' (as we say) are unorthodox, or who profess that, with regard even to the existence of the God in whom we believe, they know, and can know, nothing. The man is often better, far better, than his creed, and though his intellect may not respond to the Christian doctrine of a Comforter and Guide, in whom we hold near communion with God Himself, the Spirit of God may yet be at work upon the moral side of his nature, purifying his life, ennobling his aims, raising his whole nature at any rate half way towards the goal of Christian perfection. 'The wind bloweth whither it listeth'; and none can say what gracious work of the Spirit may not be going on in what to all outward seeming are unlikely fields.

T. L. PAPILLON.

Grieving the Holy Spirit.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
EPHESIANS iv. 30.

I. IN the first place, we may remind ourselves of what the Holy Spirit is. He is a Person, not a thing; and it is important for us to bear this distinction in mind. Our mental attitude towards an attribute, an emanation, an influence, or an abstraction of any kind, would be very different indeed from that which we instinctively assume towards the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity.

His tenderness is strongly emphasised in Scripture. You read of the wrath of God the Father; you read even of the wrath of the Lamb. But you never read of the wrath of the Spirit; and the imagery employed to describe Him and His influence on mankind is of the gentlest possible character. We have, for instance, the dew that descends silently from heaven, the rain that comes down upon the mown grass, the wind that rustles the leaves of the trees, or that sweeps away the clouds from the fair face of the sky; and if, as is once the case, the coming of this supernatural guest is symbolised by the fire and the tornado, the fire is that which gleams in harmless flame over the thoughtful brows of the first Christian disciples gathered together in the rough upper room; and the tornado is that which overthrows and destroys nothing, but only announces, by an overpowering sound, the presence of God, and bids the people assemble together to listen to His overtures of mercy. The Holy Ghost, then, is emphatically gentle and tender and kind. He

excites no emotions of alarm, like the vision that appeared to Eliphaz the Temanite; and yet we feel that, if He is a Being capable of entering into personal relations with us, our belief of this capability will necessarily influence in a marked degree the sentiments which we entertain towards Him, and the trust which we are inclined to repose in His help. In other words, our religion will be of one character if we believe that the Holy Ghost is a 'thing,' and it will be of another character if we believe that the Holy Ghost is a 'Person.' The Holy Ghost, then, is a person. But He is more than this, He is a divine person, invested with all the true and inalienable attributes of the Godhead. And again, He is that Person of the ever-blessed Trinity who comes into closest contact with us.

II. In the second place, we have to consider what the Holy Ghost does for the world at large, and particularly for the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Representing, then, the love of God, that God who yearns for the salvation of men, and whose will is that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, He presses upon the indifferent, the worldly, the unconverted, the gracious offers which the Lord Jesus Christ makes to the children of men.

What it is to 'grieve the Spirit,' *i.e.* (as it would seem) to disturb the calm blessedness of the Godhead, I do not know. But I am sure that the words have a meaning which I am to try to understand. And just as there was something corresponding to the pain and effort of self-sacrifice on the part of the Father, who, like Abraham when he offered Isaac on Moriah, 'spared not' His own Son, but delivered Him for us all, so there is something akin to grief, at least, which is best expressed to us by the word 'grief' about the feeling of the Spirit when the people in whose soul He dwells, think or speak or do what is repugnant to His holy nature. I am sometimes told that we can add nothing to God; that God sits high up in His calm blessedness, that He is a sort of epicurean deity, in nowise the happier for our love, and in no wise the less happy if we withhold our love from Him. I doubt it, because of some language of the Old Testament which I recollect, 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.' I doubt it, because of the statement of the passage before us, that the Holy Spirit can be 'grieved.' Such language as this (and you know how much of it there is in Scripture) convinces me that our God is no unemotional, impassive Being, a mere administrator of laws which we have to obey, and which we disobey at our peril. He has a heart, this great and mighty God. His name is love; and His love means something. Like our love, I believe it craves a return. And so, although I clearly see the difficulty of the subject and cannot un-

dertake to explain it, I see also that for Christ's sake as well as for our own, for the sake of the feelings of Christ, if I may so venture to express myself, it ought to be our endeavour to lead lives of purity and holiness, and of a perfect and entire consecration to the Lord our God.

With us Christians the light ought to shine, and to shine more and more, advancing to the perfect day. Men should take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. We should be more and more living epistles of the Lord, 'known and read of all men.' And in all this the indwelling Spirit is the agent, preparing us, fitting us, sealing us unto the Day of Redemption.

GORDON CALTHROP.

The Work of the Spirit.

No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. xii. 3.

THE same truth which we are going to consider is implied in many other passages of the Bible.

For instance, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.' Now it is clear, Christ is there speaking of Himself, not as He was then in His bodily presence, but as He is always in His Church by the presence of His Spirit: and therefore He says of that work of the Spirit, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.'

Or, again, words to the same effect, 'No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.' And how 'draw him'? 'With the cords of a man, with the bands of love.' What are 'the cords of a man'? God's appeal to a man: to a man in his triple constitution—to his intellect first; then to his affections; then to his soul, for those three parts make a man:—these are the spiritual cords, so that the drawing power in every instance is the Spirit of God.

Or, once more, look at Nicodemus. At his first coming to Jesus, Nicodemus was evidently an inquirer after truth; and what says Jesus? 'Before you can know anything at all of truth; before you can cross even the very threshold of truth; before you can enter, or take one step in the kingdom of God, "you must be born again." You must undergo a spiritual process. You must be touched, and changed, and "born again" of the Holy Ghost.'

And what are all these and many more, but just parallel with the text: 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.'

Now, let us look once more at the facts.

1. When God gave the moral law, he instituted a code so perfect, that if any man could do it, that man would be meet to live with God: he would have become that which God requires for his own

presence, a reflection of Himself: a reflection of His love, His wisdom, and His holiness.

And why could not man be saved in that way? Because while the law was holy, pure, just, and good, there was nothing corresponding to that pure, holy, just, good thing in man's own heart. Therefore it stood out rather as a contrast to it than any assimilating power which could make man like Him who was its author.

It failed in its attempt. God knew it would fail. God showed that He knew that it would fail, by causing the first tables of it to be broken by Moses' own hand, before he came down to the bottom of the Mount.

I know of no fact in all history so affecting as that breaking of those tables! No sooner has the Great Legislator given His laws, than, in the consciousness of their insufficiency to do their work (knowing, as God did, that the heart of man was too bad ever to allow those ten tables of the law to take effect in this world) He dashed His own work to the ground.

God, seeing the impossibility there was of any man being saved by anything excellent outside or apart from Him, proceeded to bring in, what S. Paul calls, 'the new and better covenant.'

And what was that covenant? It is announced in the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah, and ratified in the eight chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.' Observe the expression as characterising that dispensation, the new and better covenant, under which we live now, 'I will put my laws,' not upon tables, but 'into their minds': and 'write them,' not upon paper, but 'on their hearts': first intellectually into their minds and understandings; and then affectionately, into their hearts, that they may feel them: 'I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts.'

Now this is exactly the whole of the Spirit's work. It is made the base and groundwork of the system under which we live. The Spirit begins by pouring into the mind some transcript of the mind of God, some resemblance of the mind of God.

He puts, for instance, one of God's facts, or one of God's doctrines, or one of God's commandments. He leaves this indelibly upon man's soul. So He takes the initiative, without which grace itself in the loveliness of the Gospel would be no grace at all: for 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.'

We infer, then, that the very first thing towards a man's being a Christian, is some process or other in which the Holy Ghost is the active power, and the soul, simply and passively, the recipient.

But I should fail in one very great intention of these words, if I did not view them also in regard to the comfort, the exceeding comfort that they are calculated to afford.

May we infer, indeed, that we have been partakers of the Holy Ghost, if we can say, from our hearts, so little a thing as this, 'Jesus is the Lord'? Is the required condition of eternal life so small? Is the conclusion that we have an interest in the promises so sure from such a declaration as that? Then, may not very many, who perhaps have doubted it hitherto, believe that they have the Spirit of God?

There is a passage in our Saviour's life which beautifully illustrates this point. He had been asking His disciples, 'Whom say ye that I am?' S. Peter answered, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' The acknowledgment was a very simple one: the faith it manifested was not great. But now observe how Jesus treats it. Immediately Jesus said, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.' Was it so easy, then, for S. Peter by such a simple confession to obtain that benediction? Was he so quickly sure that he was taught of God? And are there not some of you who have hesitated to account yourselves children of God, who yet feel you could with your whole soul subscribe to S. Peter's words; though you cannot upon the same evidence accept the same assurance?

God forbid that I should lead any commonplace mind, any worldly, fashionable person to think they have the Spirit of God, only because they know enough to make a good creed, because they can give a cold, uninfluential assent to a tenet; and say that Jesus is the Lord. But I believe, that there are very many amongst you who would be exceedingly benefited in their religious character if they had more hopefulness. I believe there are not a few at this moment whose want, humanly speaking, whose only want, is more confidence. Therefore I desire to encourage you with this. Take it as it stands in the breadth of its simplicity, if you can say, with thoughtful desire and intention to take all it contains, 'Jesus is the Lord,' you have the Holy Ghost. I am not careful to determine now where or when you received it, but at this moment to an extent of which you are not aware, the Holy Ghost is working in your soul. I do not speak of the Spirit as something separate from, something away from you this day—a thing to be admired: I do not speak of the Spirit as something to be sought to-day; but I say the Holy Ghost is striving, teaching, dwelling at this moment in your hearts.

And, oh, what a wonderful fact, that that holy, that mighty God should be in that poor, wretched, miserable, wicked heart!

Now see the responsibility! Grieve that Spirit, and you may go on to resist Him. Resist Him, and you may find He is quenched.

Quench Him, and it is only one step to blaspheme Him. Blaspheme Him, and you will be given over to a reprobate mind, to incur that guilt that can never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.

Recognise Him. Honour Him. Use Him. Cultivate Him. And what is it? It is the harbinger of your salvation. It is your plea with God. It is the pledge of peace. It is the earnest of your inheritance. It is the firstfruits of everlasting glory.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

Uphold Me with Thy Free Spirit.

Uphold me with Thy free Spirit. PSALM li. 12.

ALTHOUGH the Holy Ghost, as we know, was not, and could not be, fully given, until after our Lord's Ascension, yet, just as the Incarnation of Christ Himself was partially understood, and He gave certain distinct glimpses of it by appearing, in human flesh, long before His birth at Bethlehem, so we are to believe that the nature and the offices of the Holy Ghost were revealed, though dimly, under the Old Testament.

How far these mysteries were then made known, it would be impossible to determine; but I conceive that the doctrine of Christ, and of the Spirit, was a secret which was gradually unfolded to the saints of that dispensation, according to the attainments which they had made in the divine life.

Nevertheless a babe in Christ now knows more of these things than patriarch or prophet ever conceived of them. And this is the meaning of those words, 'Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven,' *i.e.* in the Church now, 'he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater,' *i.e.* in knowledge, 'is greater than he.'

To such gleams of the coming revelation, David, as might have been expected, had been eminently admitted. And, as we read the Psalms, we can almost fancy that we were conversing with the mind which had known the glory of Pentecostal days.

Of these rays of the gospel day, the text is one. And the Psalmist had lighted on one of the most important of the works of the Holy Ghost, when he was guided to the thought of His sustaining power, 'Uphold me with Thy free Spirit.'

Doubtless it was intended to be, and it was, an effect of David's deep fall, that, when he rose from it, it was with an acuter sense of his own miserable weakness than he ever felt before.

This is the great lesson which life is teaching every one of us every day.

You cannot examine it; no one, however much he thinks he knows himself, has yet arrived at an adequate view of his own miserable moral helplessness.

I cannot stand, no, not for a moment. If I go alone a single step, that step I fall. No matter what experience I may have had, no matter what I may have resolved, or how solemn be the pledge which I have taken; no matter whether every earthly consideration conspire to make me keep from that sin, still such is the coil of the elastic spring of the wickedness that is in my vile heart, that the instant that I cease to lean, the instant the power of divine strength is drawn from underneath me, that moment I sink, and am lost!

Therefore David so affectingly coupled the two thoughts together, 'Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation,' and because I cannot keep that joy even if it do come back to me, 'restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit.'

And if that word free mean, as some interpret it, jealous, ingenuous, noble, then there may be, again, a direct reference to the particular circumstances of the case; and, conscious of the meanness, and the dirtiness, and the wretchedness, and the degradation of the sin into which he had fallen, David may have rightly fixed his mind on that attribute of the Spirit, which was the greatest contrast, and therefore the best corrective, to that state of his heart, 'Uphold me with Thy free Spirit.'

And, on this construction of the verse, I will only just stop to say, that the very best way to overcome any sin is to pray for, and cherish, that grace of the Spirit which is the most opposite to that particular sin.

For unclean and wicked thoughts and imaginations, I believe there is no other real and certain remedy but this only, to fill and occupy the heart with those high and pure and noble affections which are the graces of the Holy Ghost.

Therefore if there be any who are tempted in this way, let that man especially use this prayer, and cry, 'Uphold me with Thy free Spirit.'

But we are inclined to see a much larger and more evangelical signification to that expression, 'Thy free Spirit.'

I. In the first place, it distinctly shadows out the sovereignty of the action of the Holy Ghost. For very free, so free as to be utterly untraceable and incalculable, we now know, with better teaching than David's, are the wind-like motions of the Holy Ghost.

Who can ever say when the Holy Ghost begins to operate upon a man's heart, or where, or through what channels, or by what processes of thought?

Who can lay down a law, whether sorrow shall be the first feeling of an awakened mind, or exceeding joy, or fear?

The fact is, these things are all in a circle; and, being in a circle, everything may be called first, and everything may be called second; and a man, at his conversion, enters that circle at the exact point which God pleases to put him in.

But if you make a system, your chapter of real life will show its folly, and scatter it to the winds, and vindicate the truth that the Spirit is free.

Thus some men often go up to Tabor; some never.

Some are led along, almost entirely independent of human teaching; some are always receiving through man.

Some are constantly occupied with one view of God's character; some with another.

The passage of Scripture which is all light and comfort to you is at the same time dark and powerless to another who is as much a child of God as yourself.

The grace, in one mind, is all active; in another it is the same grace, but it is all passive.

And what are those times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord? Does not the very word tell us they come and go as He pleases, and have not we all found it so?

Why is the heart, which is sometimes so very hard, at other times so drawn out in melted prayer and very tenderness?

Why is the spiritual ground, which is to-day so dry, covered to-morrow with so thick a dew?

Because the Spirit is free.

But there is another reason for the name. The Holy Spirit wherever He comes, comes unmerited and unbought.

You may pray for the Spirit, and He may come in answer to your prayer; but, remember, He first inspired the wish, which made the prayer, which brought the answer.

If any man think that it rests with him to bring himself into a certain frame of mind, and that when he has reached that frame of mind, he shall, in consequence, receive the influences of the Holy Ghost, I say to that man, nay; if that were the case, the Spirit would not be free.

Or suppose that there be any one of you who has waited long, very long, for comfort, and cannot find it; and you marvel how it can be, that, diligent as you are in prayer, and in all the means of grace, you cannot yet enjoy any of the peace and love of God in your soul.

I can only say to that man, God is teaching you, now, that it is not for anything we do that He gives the Holy Ghost. Wait on!

wait on! confess to it, as an act of absolute grace; and the sooner you understand and recognise and bear testimony to the fact, that the Holy Ghost is perfectly free, the sooner he will come to you.

For no other reason in the universe does the Holy Spirit ever visit a man, than because Jesus died, and Jesus reigns for that man. Therefore, the Spirit, in all His sevenfold offices, visits the heart; and this is the lesson of the Church's order, which we are keeping to-day, Good Friday, Ascension, Whitsunday.

II. And once more, He is the free Spirit because He is the great liberator of us all.

Is it too much to say, that he who is under the expanding influences of the Spirit of God is free, and all besides are slaves?

Look at that man who is always living in himself, who can never forget himself, who never escapes from the little confines of his own narrow thoughts, whose own mind is his daily prison. What will deliver that man from the irksomeness of the bondage of his own painfully felt self-confidences? I know of nothing but the greatness of the Holy Ghost.

Or that mind, which is always living down, among the littleness of the things which lie on the surface of this empty world—borne along the tide of gaiety and fashion, from which he cannot extricate himself, though he struggles, always shut up in what men think, or what men say, or what men do, in utter thraldom to the things about him. How shall that man soar high enough to escape the fascination, and break the spell? What shall carry him into truer regions of purer thought and holier affection? How shall he ever soar away and follow the better dictates of the higher feelings which sometimes struggle within his breast? Only by the power of God's free Spirit.

Or that convicted conscience, fast bound in the iron memories of its own sins, which Satan has shut in, so closely, within the bars of a thousand doubts, and ten thousand fears; which sees no ray of pardon ever shining in upon him, who shall 'take of the things of Christ' to that imprisoned soul? who shall apply the 'Ephphatha,' and say, 'Go out. Be free?'

Can human voice? Never. Can human argument? Never. Can human sympathy? Never. Can mother's love? No; nothing but the one, great, only emancipator of the mind of man, the freer and the free, the eternal Spirit of God.

To this free Spirit, it belongs not only to commence but to carry on the great work of grace within a man's soul. And it would have been very well for some of us if we had thought more of the upholdings of the Holy Ghost!

For instance, you sometimes pray that God will impart to you

some spiritual gift; say, faith, or repentance, or a loving spirit. And it is well. But when that feeling comes into your heart, you neglect to seal it with another supplication, and to ask God to keep it there. Have not you forgotten to do that?

You did not say, when a certain good feeling visited your mind, 'Lord, uphold it.' And, because you did it not, how short and transitory have been those seasons of holy affections. What little perseverance has there been in every good thing.

We often intercede with God for the conversion of some one that we love; how much more seldom do we pray that any one may be upholden! Yet, is it less grace to go on than it is to begin, and to begin and not go on is it not worse than all?

Why do we not plead more for our friends, 'Lord, uphold them, uphold them with Thy free Spirit.'

How many a parent's heart would have been spared the bitterest sorrow of life, if that parent had been more importunate with God for the sustentation of the work in his child's soul!

It may be a comfort to us to recollect, that, as the Holy Ghost is God, He must partake of that fatherly character in which we believe all Deity stands to His creatures; and a father's mind is always to hold up his child; and to give the strongest arm to the weakest of his offspring.

Our Lord Himself has taught us to view the Holy Spirit most under the emblem of water. It is the fundamental law of water, that its property is always to rise towards the level of the height from whence it came.

True to its type, the Holy Spirit, too, thank God, is always ascending to the glory from which it came down to us; and, as it mounts, it bears within it, heavenward, the heart that owns it; and, be it only unchecked and ungrieved, it is a fountain of divine energy, always playing on; and, as it plays, it raises a man to God, raises and raises, that he cannot fall, 'a well of water springing up into everlasting life.'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

Resisting the Spirit.

Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee. Acts xxiv. 25.

THERE are passages, I suppose, in every one's life, spots of light, little islands by the ocean, just large enough and just bright enough to make the darkness of the rest more visible. Which of us at this moment could not remember times of softness and humility

and tenderer feelings, when, for a little while, we felt an unworldly peaceableness?

If any one is lost, it is those seasons which will make his condemnation.

It was because the children of Israel disbelieved when they were at the border that they were sent back, never to return again.

Oh, if we could be always what we are sometimes! If we could arrest one of those feelings, and never let it go again, would it not go far to make earth heaven?

But it is so easy to have an impression, and it is so very easy to lose it.

I. There are three kinds of quick and strong emotion.

One is a natural impulsiveness. It is almost physical. A very wicked man often has this to the greatest degree.

Another kind is the result of sensitive affection. It may be before the affections have yet been seared. Or it may be at a time when they have been much cultivated. It is often the emotion of a child, or of the female mind.

Another is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is readily distinguished from the others. It does not rest in a feeling. It soon becomes a principle and that principle expresses itself in an action.

I need not speak of the very great risk that there is of mistaking an impulsive mind, or a highly wrought state of the affections, for a real, spiritual conviction.

Nevertheless those who have impulsive minds and strong affections are the happiest, though their dangers are the greatest: for these things, once sanctified, make the highest order of piety.

It is not, perhaps, too much to say, that few are very eminent Christians or very useful characters in the world without it. Moses, David, Peter, Paul were evidently men of such a habit.

So that in this, as in many instances, God has arranged it, that the path which leads to the highest eminences is one that lies among the deepest precipices.

But even a feeling which is created by the Holy Ghost in us, may go away, and that very soon. I do not say it will not return; but certainly it may go: and if it go away and return a great many times, it may, at last, go and not return.

The reason why it goes is not, I need scarcely say, is not any changeableness which there is in the Spirit. He is all patience. His nature is never to go, but to stay, wherever He has once visited; and to increase more and more.

This was one of the points in which it was better for the Church that Christ should depart, and send the Spirit; for necessarily, 'the Man, Christ Jesus,' could not continue long with any one; but here

lay the distinction, 'I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.'

II. The cause, then, is not in the Spirit. Why is it? It may be because we do not recognise the work to be, indeed, the work of the Spirit: and we do not honour it as such. It may be, on the contrary, because we presume upon it, and do not make effort enough. It may be because we do not pray it into our minds more deeply, as we ought to do. It may be because, having followed the new leadings a little way, we presently come to points in which we are not willing to follow them any further. It may be a general looseness in our character. It may be more than all, something that grieves the Spirit, either by omitting a duty, or indulging a selfishness, or doing something an enlightened conscience condemns.

Then the grieved Spirit retires a little back, and then further back, and then further, and further, and further.

The way to keep a spiritual feeling is, first, to honour it, to thank God for it, to pray over it, to work with it, to go with it wholly, to be instant in our early obedience, to deal lovingly with it, and to prize it as our life.

Then, if we thus use well what God has already given us, He will add to it a little more; but, at each stage, it will be on the same conditions; and at each stage it will be at the same ratio, even to death and, perhaps, beyond death.

But we are taught to-day an important lesson from the text. Felix made two great mistakes. He did not know what constituted 'a convenient season,' and he presumed he might repent and turn to God whenever he pleased.

We are all apt to give too much weight, whether to help or hindrance, to external circumstances. It is a testimony to true religion, that almost every one will say that he hopes, and means, some day or other, to be, if not very religious, yet certainly more religious than he is now.

But, then, all fancy that, by-and-by, they will be in a position which will be more favourable to make a beginning.

They will be holier; or their anxieties will be fewer; or their temptations will be less; or their religious advantages will be greater; or their associations in life will be more fitting. So their state of mind will be better prepared.

They picture a certain future, which wears a sober, and almost a religious, aspect; and then they call that 'a convenient season.'

But I have learned, and you will do very well to learn too, that outward things have much less to do than persons generally think with the great work within.

They who said, 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange

land?' do not appear to have sung it much when they were in their own.

We have seen persons whose souls starved in the richest pasture; and others thrive in the weakest.

One has all the religious education and pious parentage and holiest privileges given him in early life; and that young man goes on half an infidel.

Another has scarcely one apparent spiritual advantage; yet it is wonderful to see how his soul lives, and how his graces are flourishing.

Is it sovereignty? Or is it God, teaching us that He is sufficient, and that He is alone, and that He is all in all, in this matter?

If it teaches anything, it teaches us this, that, compared with the actings of the Holy Ghost upon a man's heart, the whole world besides, and the whole Church, and everything that can be named, how holy, influential, and blessed soever; afflictions, ordinances, gifts, place, friends, circumstances are of so little power and importance as that they are literally nothing?

It is the felt willingness of God to receive us; it is the 'still, small voice' consciously heard within; it is the drawings of the secret, constraining power, which is the operation of the Spirit of God upon the conscience and the affections, these make the convenient season.

Where these are, everything is sure to be convenient; God will make it convenient, how unlikely soever it be.

Where these are not, there will be an inconvenience, an utter impossibility.

Remember, if the Spirit is now striving, the convenient, the most convenient, the one convenient, perhaps the only convenient, season of life is come.

It needs no other proof, that now, that emphatic now, that God has written before your eyes, so awfully and so solemnly: your now is here.

Alas, that you should mistake the date, when the inaccuracy of an hour may cost you eternity!

And in this matter of conversion no man can say that the Spirit will work in him at any given time.

Felix might think, 'I will send for Paul another time.' But he would not have the wish to send for Paul unless the Spirit put it in his heart; and even if he did send for Paul, could he command that the Spirit would come too? And yet, if Paul came, and the Spirit did not come, what use is it?

We are, most of us, so accustomed to have the good Spirit always acting on our hearts, that it is very difficult for us to imagine a time when He shall not act.

But supposing some man, with everything ready for a voyage, can

he sail if the wind be not in his favour? and can he secure the wind?

No man can say that a year hence, or a day hence, or an hour hence, the Holy Spirit will lead him to God, and enable him to repent.

To calculate upon that is to put such an affront upon the attributes and the nature of that great, free, sovereign Being, that the very thought of Himself is enough to make Him suspend His influences, and to declare, in His displeasure, that He will never come to you again.

Therefore all religious procrastination is an insult to the Holy Ghost.

The only time to keep a resolution is the moment that it visits you; and he who does not turn to God when he is drawn, increases, each time, tremendously, the risk that he will never turn at all!

JAMES VAUGHAN.

The Example of the Church of Antioch.

And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. Acts xiii. 2-3.

I. THE book from which this passage is taken has been called, as we all know, 'the Gospel of the Spirit.' The incident which it here records marks an epoch in the history of the Church, and its consideration is appropriate to this day, on which we commemorate the first outpouring of the Spirit on the Apostles at the Festival of Pentecost.

As we read it, we seem to lose sight altogether of Jerusalem and the original Twelve. The city of Antioch, 'the gate of the East,' surrounded by a teeming population of Gentiles, becomes the centre of special and absorbing interest. To the Hellenistic Church there, ministered to by men of the most varied origin and sympathies, the question of the conversion of the heathen world must have come continually home with a sense of its urgency and its greatness, to which the older churches of the circumcision were almost of necessity strangers. The members of the Church of Antioch might well deem themselves the link between the Jewish and the Gentile world. And so, while they were engaged in special 'liturgies and fasts,' probably with reference to the means which were to be adopted for the spread of the Gospel, they received

from the Holy Ghost a distinct and solemn command, the like or which had never been given to any portion of the Church before, to consecrate Barnabas and Saul to the work of the Apostolate. Thereupon, not disobedient to the monitions of the blessed Spirit, they took steps for carrying the command into instant execution. 'They fasted and prayed, laid their hands on them, and sent them away' on a mission, the far-reaching consequences of which they could not possibly foresee.

II. They sent them away. The first point which the incident suggests is that the mother church of the Gentile world manifested on this occasion its fresh and vigorous life by the very fact that it put forth its power as a mission church. It recognised the duty laid upon it and upon all churches by its Divine Head, and took its part in that great onward movement, which, through all the centuries, from the Ascension of our Lord down to the present time, has been going on for the evangelisation of the world.

Through all the centuries. For nothing is more remarkable, and nothing has a greater evidential force of its own, than that at no epoch since these early Ember Days of the Church of Antioch has the fire of missionary enthusiasm been entirely quenched, or the continuity of the line of the heralds of the Cross been absolutely broken. History has justified the unbounded confidence wherewith the lonely speaker of Olivet looked forward to the rise of a succession of heralds who should undertake the unique task of making the proclamation of His gospel a distinct and direct work.

III. The best men. And here the example of the Church of Antioch is of the utmost importance. The mother church of the Gentiles did not say, when the call came to her, as not a few in these days would have had her say, 'when there is no longer one neglected spot, or one vicious life, in our own city, then, if we can, we will send those whom we can best spare.' No. She sent forth at once the best men ready to her hand. Of the typical group assembled in that Oriental Rome, 'the flower and crown' undoubtedly were Barnabas of Cyprus and Saul of Tarsus. Of these the Church of Antioch sent forth not one, but both. She grudged neither to the great cause. She kept neither back for herself. Obedient to the leading of the Spirit, she freely gave both for the work unto which they were summoned.

And similarly now the Church at home must be prepared to give up without a murmur, not her meanest, but her mightiest, for the work in India, 'that living epitome of the races, the revolutions and the creeds of the East.'

Does not the retrospect of the last fifty years teach us that, in giving the best men for work abroad, we take the very step which

most intensifies the vigorous action of Church life at home? When was it more significantly proved than during this period that the intensive and extensive work of the Church always go hand in hand?

The intense work. Think what the aspect of our Church was fifty years ago. Fifty years ago who would have thought possible the change which has come over our village churches and stately cathedrals? Fifty years ago who would have thought of seeing working men in their guilds and associations gathered in numbers to early Communion at a cathedral altar, and joining in a service once regarded as something intended for the stricter and more devout few, or the rare and occasional incentive to a flagging faith? Fifty years ago who should have thought of seeing, not only colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, but public schools like Eton and Winchester, Harrow, Uppingham, Cheltenham, sending forth their respective missions in the east end of our overcrowded Metropolis? Fifty years ago who would have credited the springing up of Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods of all kinds, and the list of the numerous agencies which now exist for supplying the spiritual needs of our mining population and of those employed on our railways, our canals, our rivers? God forbid that we shall utter a word of boasting. God forbid that we shall ever forget how much serious and active goodness there was in the times preceding that with which we are now familiar. Still, those living can attest how the outward and public aspect of the Church at home has been transfigured, how she has girded herself with renewed energy 'to do her first works.'

When the Church of Antioch sent out her representatives, she sent them out together. She sent not Saul alone or Barnabas alone, but Saul and Barnabas. She recognised the principle of associated labour. She did not countenance or encourage isolation. She knew that what a Barnabas lacked, a Saul could supply, and what a disciple of Gamaliel might need in hours of discouragement 'the Son of Consolation' could bestow.

Now I know that some brave spirits can stand alone. But to the majority the isolation of our missionary stations entails a terrible strain; and the attempt to work alone is fraught with peril, especially in heathen lands; and some of the most disastrous shipwrecks are traceable to this cause.

It is well to remember the words of the Bishop of Japan: 'That the English parsonage cannot be taken, especially in Eastern lands, as supplying the norm and type of the foreign missionary.' The Oriental expects of the religious teacher a self-devotion, and an abnegation of the comforts of life, at least comparable with that exhibited by his own religious leaders. And if the Oxford Mission at

Calcutta, and the Cambridge Mission at Delhi, as missions to the learned and polished classes of India, 'portend,' to use the words of the present Primate, 'the greatest change hitherto effected by mission work,' they illustrate also in the most striking manner the advantages of the Community Mission. The Community Mission supplies a real need and recalls ancient precedents. What the network of colonies was to ancient Rome as military outposts in her chain of conquests, that the missionary colonies of the Celtic and English Churches were in laying the foundations of European Christendom. They made the waste places of Germany spring into fruitful life; and is it utterly quixotic to think that something of the same kind might be attempted now, on however small a scale?

'Missionaries,' it has been said, 'will be what religious opinion at home expects them to be.' Water cannot rise higher than its source. What the parent Church is, such will be those whom she sends out to distant lands. If she expects little they will give little. If with her the flame of sacred zeal burns low, theirs will burn lower still abroad. The impulse which creates a great mission comes from the Church at home; and no Church has exhibited the self-sacrificing trust shown by the brethren at Antioch but she has in time reaped a reward greater than any she asked or thought.

G. F. MACLEAR.

Witnessing the Truth.

When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning. S. JOHN xv. 26, 27.

OUR Lord speaks here of two witnesses. 'The Spirit of Truth,' He says to His disciples, 'He shall testify, or bear witness of Me, and ye also shall bear witness.' Looking on into the future, He speaks of the witness, or testimony, which is to be borne to Him by the Holy Spirit, and of the witness, or testimony, which is to be borne to Him by the disciples who had known Him and lived with Him. He puts the two witnesses together, and no one can read these words of His without thinking He meant the disciples to understand that the two witnesses were to go together, and that the existence of each was necessary for that work which was to be done in the future in the world for Him. The coming of the Comforter is put before His disciples by our Lord more than once as something quite essential. His words show that the purposes for which He

came into the world could not be effected, the work which He desired to see done among men could not be done, without this coming of the Comforter; nothing could stand in the place of that coming, nothing could do what the Comforter was to do. But yet the coming of that Comforter was not to suspend the active work of men; it was not to suspend the use of their natural power in the performance of that work. Their usefulness for the work depended upon considerations lying outside the special powers given by the Comforter. 'Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.' The disciples are to bear witness of Christ, and are to do so because of their having been with Him; that is, they are to bear witness because of the knowledge they had gained of Him through their daily intercourse with Him. Just as one man can bear witness about another with whom he has lived on terms of intimate friendship which a stranger cannot, so those who knew our Lord so intimately as the disciples did could bear witness as none others could, and this witness was a necessity for the world. And so this knowledge, this power of bearing such witness, is the qualification which is set forth in the election of an Apostle in the room of Judas Iscariot. 'Wherefore,' says S. Peter, 'of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His Resurrection.' So here, in our Lord's words in my text, as He looks on to what was to be, after He had been taken up into heaven, and His disciples had gone forth to gather men into His Church, He speaks of the witness that is to be borne to Him; the witness, first of the Holy Ghost, and secondly the witness of the Apostles, the witness that they should bear of all that they had seen or heard, and learnt to know, through living with Him from the beginning of His ministry, from the baptism of John, to the day when He was to leave them to go to the Father.

The thoughts suggested by these words of our Lord are, I think, very suitable for our consideration to-day, for to-day we have before us the history of the special coming of the Comforter to the disciples of Christ, according to His most true promise. There, in that coming, was the birthday of the Church of Christ. Christ had indeed already gathered together His disciples, and had taught them. He had formed the body before this day, but it was not until this day that He breathed into it the breath of life, for its work in the world, in the gift of the Holy Spirit. To-day that body of Christ first lived with spiritual life, and began to execute its mission, witnessing to the world of Christ, drawing men to Him, bringing them to repent-

ance, and then admitting them into covenant with Him. We see in the history of that great day of Pentecost the first action of the Church as a body. It is true, as we look at the records to see what the disciples did, the main thing that claims our attention is the great speech by S. Peter. But S. Peter comes forward, not for himself alone, but as the mouthpiece of the disciples; not for himself alone, but as leader of a band of men, and he speaks and acts as leader: behind him and with him are these others. So, then, in S. Peter's action we see the action of a body of men; it is the action of a body of men with a common cause and common purpose, the action of a body of men bearing witness to the world.

I. And now let us turn again to the event of to-day, and what do we see? First, we see the action of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes on the disciples, and He declares His presence in them and with them by the manifestation of new powers with which they are endued. Devout men from every nation under heaven are amazed as they hear these Galileans speak to them in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. It is something very wonderful which is being done before them, and they ask one another, 'What meaneth this?' And so the Holy Ghost witnessed to those devout men. He declared to them that the hand of God was upon these Galileans, and His power in them. And so, in fact, the Holy Ghost bore witness of Christ, for those men who spoke were the disciples of Jesus: that was evidently the condition of their being thus endued with power, this power, I mean, came upon these particular men, and did not travel on beyond them to others. It came just where Jesus was honoured as Lord and Christ, just there and no further. So the Holy Ghost bore witness of Christ on the day of Pentecost; He bore witness to the world in the gift of power to that particular body of men.

But this is not by any means the only way in which our Lord's promise in my text was fulfilled. Let us think what we see further in the events of that day of Pentecost, besides this manifestation of the action of the Holy Spirit. We have the action of the Apostles: S. Peter stood up with the eleven and spake in their name to the assembled crowd. He spoke of what? He spoke of Jesus, of His Death and Resurrection. 'This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.' Here is the fulfilment of the other part of our Lord's declaration in the text: 'And ye also shall bear witness.' S. Peter appeals to certain facts, and to a knowledge of those facts which he and his brother Apostles had, and which was all independent of what had just happened to them on that morning, of the power with which they had been endued. Here is the witness of men, the common testimony of ordinary history. But, then, see how S. Peter

deals with these facts, how he uses them. He shows, now, what none of the Apostles had shown before, a true perception of how the Scriptures spoke of Christ. He saw things in the Scriptures which he had not seen before; he saw how the things he read there in those Scriptures fitted themselves exactly to the events that had been taking place before his eyes; he now saw Jesus Christ in the Old Testament as he had not seen Him before. And how was this? Where is the secret of this sudden gift of sight? Was it not in this, that now the Holy Spirit, who spake of old by the prophets, was in him, enabling him to see the meaning of what the prophets had said? The Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, when He came to the Apostles testified to them of the truth of God which was contained in the Scriptures, and so testified of Christ.

II. Here, then, we have the Holy Spirit witnessing to the world through the Church, and we must at once notice this, that He witnesses through the mouth of individuals, He witnesses to the heart and mind of those individuals, and so enables them to speak in our Lord's words in my text. The witness of the Holy Spirit is to be before the witness of the Apostles, and it is because that witness of the Holy Spirit lies at the root of the other witness. The witness of facts must indeed be borne to the ignorant before they know and believe, before they can appreciate the witness of the Spirit. But he who declares the witness of facts must himself be taught by the Holy Spirit the significance of that witness before he can rightly declare it. And so we see that there is something further to be noticed. What was the result of S. Peter's address to the people? It was very striking. Men were not only astonished by what they saw and heard, they were touched by what he said, and were convinced by it; 'they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.' This was the result of the witness which S. Peter and the Apostles bore to Christ on that occasion, and a very striking result it was. But when we turn again to that which produced such a result, at first sight, it was very simple: it was a statement of certain facts. Some of the facts were well known. S. Peter appeals to the knowledge that people had of the miracles Christ had done, and the cruel and shameful death He had died. He then insisted on the fact of the Resurrection. That was a great fact to which the Apostles witnessed which lay outside the knowledge of the multitudes whom S. Peter addressed. But with this statement of facts, there was this in S. Peter's speech, there was the assertion of God's approval of Jesus of Nazareth, and of the fulfilment in Him of the prophecies relating to the Messiah. Then comes the force of the appeal in the great

contrast set up, the contrast between God's treatment and their treatment of Jesus of Nazareth: for in this contrast is an appeal to something within them, an appeal to a sense of righteousness, of justice, of truth; and then here comes in the working of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Holy Spirit who makes righteousness and justice and truth great realities to the conscience of man. S. Stephen, as you remember, made such an appeal, and his judges, in their anger, refused to entertain it. So what did he say? 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart aud ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.' They were resisting the Holy Ghost in resisting that appeal to their conscience, that appeal to their sense of righteousness and truth which he was making as he set forth the facts of history and showed how they bore on the life and claims of Jesus of Nazareth. And so it is we have, in the events of that great day of Pentecost, the fulfilment of our Lord's words in my text, and the first example of that which has been continually repeated in the world ever since through the agency of the Church of Christ. We have the witness of men, we have men declaring that which they perceive and know as men; we know the historic witness of certain events, and then we have with that the spiritual perception of the force and meaning of those events both in those who declare them and in those who receive their witness. The acceptance of spiritual truth, the giving of more than that assent of mind and understanding which we may give to any piece of ordinary history, the taking of it as that which is to enlighten life and to give life its true aims and its hopes, and to rule it and to invigorate it, is the work of the Holy Spirit; it is the Holy Spirit who bears witness to the truth and makes such an acceptance possible and enables men so to live. The Holy Spirit bears witness to Christ. It is not only in such wondrous manifestations as those of that day of Pentecost that He does so. S. Paul declared to the Corinthians that it was not in miraculous manifestations alone that the working of the Holy Spirit was seen; it was to be seen in the very groundwork of Christian faith. It was not to be seen only in the power to speak with tongues, and so forth: those who had risen from the defilement of idol-worship to the apprehension of Christian truth, he says, showed the work of the Spirit. 'No man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed.' 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit.'

III. The words of my text belong to all time, they belong to us. God deals with men now, He deals with us through this twofold witness. There is the witness borne by men, the historic witness of the truth: there is the witness borne by the Holy Spirit to the truth. Religion is not a matter of ordinary knowledge alone. It does not appeal only to the reason and the judgment. On the other hand it is not

simply an assurance within, which can dispense with reason and judgment. 'I speak unto wise men, judge ye what I say,' is S. Paul's appeal to those he taught and would have serve God in a way pleasing to Him. It is the spirit in which appeals are made by Christ Himself, and all who speak for Him in His name in the Bible. Yet to know Christ is not a matter for the reason and the understanding only; to know Christ is not the same thing in kind as the practical knowledge of men which we have. The facts of His life are put before us in the gospels; there in that history we can know Jesus Christ in a way, if we read it as any history; but what is such knowledge of Jesus compared with that higher knowledge based upon these facts, formed by them, absolutely unattainable without them, which is borne in upon our souls by the power which touches our conscience and our hearts and shows us truths with a beauty, a power, and a constraining force such as nothing earthly ever does? The life of Jesus can indeed touch men, as the history of goodness, unselfishness, meekness, courage, high sense of duty, unworldliness, must touch men; and the sorrows of Jesus can move the heart of any attentive reader of the Gospels, and perhaps bring tears of compassion to his eyes. But, would you know what that life can be, and what those sorrows can be to man, ask, if you have never known it yourself, ask one who has had to rouse himself to meet some duty and to call up strength to face some act of self-abasement or self-sacrifice, what the life of Christ has been to him, as he contemplated it on his knees, and prayed for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; ask one who is bowed down with grief what the vision of the suffering Saviour has been to him through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, how a sense of the love, the tenderness, the resignation, the courage, the hopefulness, which he has seen in Him has come into his heart, into his whole being, with such living power as to make the Man of Sorrows the true consoler and comforter of all who mourn; and ask the penitent sinner what he has seen in Jesus on the Cross, while a voice has come, 'God so loved the world, therefore loves thee,' a voice from that Cross full of hope and then bringing unearthly peace; ask the mourner what has shot a ray of unutterable brightness through the deep gloom that enwrapped him as he heard the words, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.' One and all will say it is something more than human reasoning, it is something very deep, very real, very true, it is the mystery of the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, testifying of the Son, according to His most true promise. BISHOP FESTING.

WHITSUNDAY

The Sin against the Holy Ghost.

Therefore I say unto you, that every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. S. MATTHEW xii. 31.

THERE is probably no text of Scripture of which the full meaning is more uncertain, and yet, in spite of its obscurity, probably no text in which there lies a more solemn warning. In the explanation of its details the holiest thinkers have differed, and have differed so deeply that we must content ourselves with the wise rule of the Rabbis, which it might be well for theology if she adopted as a more frequent motto, 'Learn to say, I do not know.' One need not, however, listen to any explanation which does but play fast and loose with the words, and which interprets them, not by their plain meaning, but by the dogmas which we bring into them. Thus, if the words, 'it shall not be forgiven,' be insisted upon with literal and exceptionless rigidity, then, 'it shall be forgiven,' must be equally accepted. We are not to follow the common fashion of crowding our limitations into the promises of mercy, and giving an absolute boundlessness to the warnings of revelation. The Pharisees had attributed to Beelzebub Christ's miracles of love; He proves to them the wicked absurdity of this blasphemy against Him, and yet He adds, 'Every sin and blasphemy against the Son of Man shall be forgiven.' Could there be a more dreadful sin than that of His betrayers and murderers, those who nailed Him to the horrible Cross? Yet even for them He prayed, 'Father, forgive them,'—and why?—'for they know not what they do.' A sin which is committed without recognition of its heinousness is pardonable on repentance—it may be blotted out, it may be forgiven; its punishment may be remitted. But there is a sin against the Holy Ghost, a blasphemy against the Spirit, which is against light and knowledge, which is not only wilful but willing, which cannot be pardoned, which must be expiated, of which the punishment cannot be remitted, neither in this world nor in that which is to come.

I. But the point of nearer import, then, to us is to see of what nature is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Why should speaking against the Holy Spirit be less pardonable than blasphemy against the Son of God? Not—do not imagine it for a moment—as though the Holy Ghost were greater than the Father and the Son, for in this Trinity 'none is afore or after other,' none is greater or less than another.' But the sin of one who has received the Spirit is more conscious; it is a deadlier sin, because the sinner who commits it stands higher in the Christian life. Admitted into a holier sanctuary,

he becomes guilty of a deeper sacrilege; he casts a darker shadow because he stands in a brighter sun. The greater unpardonableness, whatever it be, however it be extended or limited, consists not in the nature of Him against whom it is committed, but in the state of heart of him who has been guilty of it. I shall not, therefore, touch on the dark and unfathomable subject of what has been called the sin against the Holy Ghost, the unpardonable sin. 'That way madness lies.'

No one can pretend on earth to say what this sin is: we simply do not know. There is no known sin of which we can dare to say, without lawful presumption, that God can never forgive it. Ignorant and morbid brooding on this matter has often been an instrument in the hands of Satan to craze weak brains. Suffice it for us that all sin is exceedingly sinful, and that until it be forsaken no sin can be forgiven. But even when we have said this the text continues to be a word of solemn and even of awful warning. It deeply behoves us to consider what sins are sins against the Holy Spirit of God, to whom this day is consecrated. Even though they be not beyond the reach of forgiveness it is clear that their deadliness is great and awful.

You begin the Creed by saying that you believe in an Almighty Father. Well, you may entirely lose the sense of that Fatherhood and yet be forgiven. You go on to say that you believe in a Saviour Son: you may entirely lose the sense of that Sonship and yet be forgiven. But the third article, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life,' disbelieve that if you dare: disbelieve that, and your own being is degraded into the state of dust driven by the wind, and the element of dissolution has entered into your very heart and soul. And why? Briefly and summarily, because the Spirit is the source of life, of all true life, and all nature with one voice and with one glory is set to teach you reverence for the life communicated to you by the Father of Spirits. If the knowledge of God be life, if Christ be God made manifest in the Flesh, and the Spirit be the eye wherewith we see Him, if the Holy Ghost be the giver of life, surely all repudiation of God, all refusal to acknowledge God, must be a willing death and a moral suicide and a sin against the Spirit, for all things testify to us of God. The visible things reveal to us the eternal power and Godhead of Him who is invisible. On every page of the world God has written His divine autograph of beauty. The sky, the plumage of the birds, the bursting of spring, the golden gleams of foliage in the sunlight, the unfolding of the flower, the falling of the dew, the music of the summer breeze-water, that pure diamond of God, now glorious in the sea, now iridescent in the rainbow, now hanging in fleeces of scarlet and amethyst in the evening clouds, the lilies of the field, more beautifully arrayed than Solomon in his glory.

These are signs of that soul in all things, which is God. And earth is not dumb; it is full of voices which speak of Him. Voices of the sea and of the mountain, of the torrent and of the avalanche, of the thunder and of the whirlwind, shout His name. 'Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night telleth knowledge.' Continuously, consentaneously, in tones troubled indeed at times, but never silenced, earth with her thousand voices praises God. Surely, then, to be dead to this apocalypse of Godhead in the sham wisdom, in the vain imagination, in the darkened heart; to be deaf to all these voices, blind to all this revelation of magnificence; to stand in this vast temple with no deep reverence and no due heed; to repudiate this unanimous testimony which the universe has borne to generation after generation of all the races of mankind, in one word, to say that there is no God; surely this is a consummate and a wilful sin against the Spirit. 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' The fool may be a fool of wide knowledge and of powerful genius. By fool Scripture does not mean one void of intelligence or learning, but one on whom, because he does not choose to keep God in his remembrance, God sends strong delusion that he may believe a lie. Oh beware of pride, of sensuality, and of faithlessness!

Corresponding with all that we call God is everything that ennobles and inspires mankind, everything that God imparts to man by His Holy Spirit. There are two worlds. One is the world of gloom, terror, foulness, decay, disease, disorder, impurity, death, the world of physical and moral leprosy, the world of everything which is corrupt and mean and ignoble and degrading, which corresponds to the existence of evil. It is the kingdom of Satan, and every one who sells himself to do evil enlarges this world of misery, enrols himself as a subject in this kingdom of Satan. The other is the world of light, of beauty, of purity, of innocence, of holiness; it is the kingdom of God. All who live in it are His servants, all that witnesses to it is the witness of His Spirit, all the glories around us, the starry heavens above, the moral law within, the light wherein He decks Himself as with a garment, the many-coloured rainbow, this serene azure, this crystalline radiance, this ordered loveliness, this sevenfold perfection of the undivided sunbeam has its reflex and its analogon in the soul of man.

Now there was but one, the sinless One, whose soul was perfect, who thus became the light of the world, the supreme of holiness, the sublime of manhood; and when man having thus tasted of the heavenly gift of the good Word of God, and having been once enlightened, turns his back on all these, becomes an apostate and a renegade, blasphemes Christ, counts the blood of the covenant wherewith he was redeemed an unholy thing, tramples underfoot

the Lord of life and love, can we see any way by which it is possible to renew such an one to repentance? Such a way is only known to God. Must we not see in such an apostasy a sin against the Spirit of God?

II. But the sin is not in mere words—that blasphemy which Christ says shall be forgiven. It is a sin of the life. It is a sin of the whole being. Wherever any man, whether he calls himself an Atheist or a Christian, gives himself over to vile affections, or becomes filled with all injustice, wickedness, uncleanness, avarice, brimming with envy, murder, discord, guile, malice, a whisperer, a backbiter, a God-hater, insolent, overweening, a braggart, an inventor of evil things, utterly selfish, rotten, as it were, to the heart's core; when for beauty he delights in all that is foul and morbid, when he feeds a corrupt imagination with unhallowed desires, and in abnormal and dehumanising development, admits into his soul a chill and a plague as if risen out of the sepulchre, which partly deadens, partly darkens the minds of men, then there breathes a leprosy of decay through every word and action. Every one who sins against light and knowledge, every one who in his measure will say, 'I will eat of the forbidden fruit,' every one who calls evil good and good evil, puts darkness for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, commits this sin.

III. But in one last word, 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' Here I leave these awful regions of sin and peril and darkness. Here let the sweet, pure air of God sweep through this poisonous atmosphere of the charnel-house; here let the sun shine forth deluging the gloom with glory; here let the emerald rainbow illuminate the storm, in an age when evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse. I have indeed spoken words which, as the whole state of society shows, are much needed words of solemn warning; but I have not for one moment forgotten that this is Whitsunday, that it may be for every one of us in reality a blessed day of brightness, of strength, of hope. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of the Lord of life, and a witness to our hearts that there is a Holy Catholic Church of which every one of us is a member; a communion of saints, to which we may belong; and a forgiveness of sins of which we may all partake, and a resurrection of the body and a life everlasting, which may, even to the worst, and the most abandoned, and most habitual sinner, here may still be—because the offer of Christ's pardon is still open to him—may still be an immortality full of joy unspeakable. DEAN FARRAR.

WHITSUNDAY

The Power of the Holy Spirit.

Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. Acts i. 8.

ONE great need of the Church of Christ to-day is spiritual power. She creeps where once she ran. She stands still where once she advanced by leaps and bounds. Ringed in by the darkness of heathenism, of indifference, and of unbelief, her light spreads but slowly, and sometimes seems even to yield before the pressure of the surrounding gloom. For nineteen centuries she has been God's witness on earth; and still the greater part of the human race know not God and His Son Jesus Christ. Of material power she displays no lack. In the last fifty years our own branch of the Holy Catholic Church has shown a vigour which has amazed even her most hopeful sons. She has covered the land with new and restored churches. She has raised vast sums for the work of God. She has bestowed the greatest care on the externals of public worship. She has sent forth countless missions to evangelise the heathen in our great cities and in foreign lands. She has excited a widespread interest in religious questions. In the Pan-Anglican Synod of last year the world saw the embodiment of her strength and of her growing capacity for vigorous work.

And yet, where are the spiritual results corresponding to this wonderful outburst of church life? has the standard of personal holiness risen? While the number of our communicants has almost quadrupled, has the number of our saints grown? With all this stir, and talk, and light, are Churchmen as a whole more unselfish and more self-sacrificing? Have real conversions to God multiplied? Has the tone of the religious press become more healthy? From all sides, from weary workers in the mission field, and in the slums of our great cities; from brave men and women fighting the dreadful trinity of evil,—unbelief, intemperance, and impurity; from the Christian thinkers who are facing the great social and intellectual problems of our age; from the villages and hamlets of our country, there comes a cry for greater spiritual power—power for holiness, for active service, and for patient suffering. The very keenness of this sense of need is a sign of promise, and a prophecy of fulfilment. It is the Spirit of God who has brought home to us the knowledge of our weakness, that He may supply us with strength. He is with the Church. He lives in all her true and faithful members as the source of power. 'Ye shall receive power,' said our Lord to His disciples as He was on the point of ascending into heaven, 'when the Holy Ghost is come upon you.' And the Holy Ghost has come, and waits to give power to as many as are willing and able to receive it.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

I. First, we need a firmer grasp of the truth, so strangely forgotten or ignored, or unrealised, that God the Holy Spirit is at this moment dwelling with the Church and in all her true members. Here lay the strength of the early Christians. His Person, and Presence, and work were to them realities. They were 'filled with the Holy Ghost.' They 'witnessed with the Holy Ghost.' They 'walked in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.' They were 'sent forth by the Holy Ghost.' They 'prayed in the Holy Ghost.' They tasted 'the joy of the Holy Ghost.' The Acts of the Apostles has been well called the Acts of God the Holy Ghost, for the men whose deeds it records were His channels. In that faith lay the secret of their saintly lives, their prevailing prayers, their heart-searching words, their fruitful labours, their unfailing courage. Alas, how changed are we! We profess in the Creed to believe in 'the Holy Ghost as the Lord and Giver of Life'; we praise Him in every *Gloria* and ascription; we commemorate every year His descent at Pentecost; we pray in one of the finest of our collects that He 'may in all things direct and rule our hearts'; and yet we know practically very little of His power, and live far below the possibilities which His Presence brings within our reach. If we say we are the temples of the Holy Spirit and that He dwells in us, why are we content to lead joyless lives amidst the fogs and mists of the valley instead of rising to the sunlit heights where the peace of God rests? If we realise the meaning of the promise, 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh,' why have we so much cause to mourn over half-slain sins, so often to despair because worsted in the struggle with evil? If we believed that we were His channels and instruments, chosen and fitted by Him to help forward the triumph of righteousness, and that in His hand the peculiar gift which each one possesses would multiply like the bread in the wilderness in the hand of the Lord, and prove sufficient to accomplish work far beyond our highest hopes, should we not go out with stronger, braver, calmer hearts to live and to speak, to work and to suffer, confident of final victory, and careless of present appearances? We fail to honour God the Holy Spirit by giving Him His due place in our hearts and in our work, and He cannot honour us by transfiguring our lives and by empowering our service.

II. Secondly, we must cultivate those conditions under which alone the Holy Spirit can manifest His power, chiefly submission and love.

1. It has been said that a separate will is the cause of half the troubles in the world. It is certainly the secret of half the weakness in the Church. In grace, as in nature, forces work along the line of least resistance. The Holy Spirit can be resisted and grieved and quenched. He manifests His power only where it is desired and welcomed and thankfully used. The proud and self-willed heart, im-

patient of guidance, bent on choosing for itself, enthusiastic in the service that it likes, neglectful of what it dislikes, is no fit sphere for the Holy Spirit. 'He can do there no mighty work.' The heart which, like the fallen prophet, wants, as Archbishop Fénelon says, 'God to will what it wishes, so that in accepting His will it may have its own way,' can be no true conductor of the power of the Holy Spirit. But when, like Saul of Tarsus, we are ready 'to submit and to commit'—to submit our will to His, and to commit ourselves into His hands, and to ask, 'What shall I do, Lord?' it will be told us, as it was to him, what we must do; and like him we shall be filled with the Holy Ghost. 'God will work in us both to will and to work according to His good pleasure.' Make God's will thine,' said a Jewish Rabbi, 'and He will make thine His.'

2. We need love. The Spirit of Love (who is love, and who gives love) can only live where love is. Do we wonder at our lack of saintliness and of power, at the great chasm which separates us from the heroes of the early Church? One reason is our want of love. Look at the bitterness of party spirit, its intolerance, its injustice, its prejudices; mark how it blinds, and severs, and despiritualises; how it exalts man and hides God; how the fire and fierceness of controversy, like some scorching wind, wither, blacken, and deface the fairest flowers in the garden of God. How can the Holy Spirit work in spirits heated and angered by strife and clouded with passion, knowing but little of that divine charity which 'suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, which is not puffed up, which seeketh not her own, and is not easily provoked'? He cannot. We limit the Holy One of Israel. We grieve Him. Every day the prayer goes up, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from us,' and every day we provoke God to withdraw His Presence from us by our unhappy divisions. We are bound to contend for God's truth; but why cannot we contend in love? Why colour, misrepresent, exaggerate, and salt it with scorn and superciliousness, and sharp and biting jests? We are bound to protest against error, but why not protest with calmness and self-restraint, in the spirit of Christ, to convince and not to irritate, in sorrow and not in sarcasm? If we desire our Church to fulfil her mission and to be the home of saints, the nursery of spiritual heroes, and the great Missionary Church of the West, each of us who call her Mother must learn to cultivate a spirit of love, and learn where alone the lesson can be taught in its highest perfection, at the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In full view of that, the greatest manifestation of God's love to man, in the realisation of the forgiveness of sins which stands at the very threshold of the spiritual life, we shall best learn to love God because He first loved us, and with that most excellent gift of love, 'the very bond of peace and of all virtues,

without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God,' comes the Holy Spirit, at once the giver and the accompaniment of the gift. And where love reigns, there the Holy Spirit delights to work.

III. Thirdly, we must use the means by which this needed spiritual strength is appropriated—solitary prayer for the individual, united prayer for the Church.

1. Our weakness, our cowardice, our unreality spring in a special degree from the neglect of solitude with God. Solitude has been the nurse of all the strongest spirits that the Church has sent forth. 'In the solitary place' our Lord Himself drew strength to meet every crisis of His life. The wilderness, the mountain, the garden witnessed His lonely wrestlings with His Father. It was when He was praying in the Jordan that the Spirit of God descended visibly, and abode upon Him. It was when He was praying on the Mount that 'His face shone as the light, and His raiment became white and glistering.' It was when He was praying in Gethsemane that 'there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him.' In this restless and busy age most of us live too much in public; 'the world is too much with us: getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.' We spend our spiritual strength and forget to renew it. We multiply our engagements to curtail our prayers. We silence misgivings by the assurance that all true work is prayer. So it is, and God is able to bless those who in the midst of busy lives can give Him but a few minutes every day for worship, as much as He blesses others who having more leisure can give Him hours. But God demands our best, and too often we fail to give it. By an error of judgment, or perhaps by the subtle force of inclination which we mistake for necessity, we work when we ought to pray, because to an active mind work is far easier than prayer. Then God cannot bless, because we have weakened our capacity to receive. We grow feeble and shallow and distracted. Our work is done superficially, and will not stand: the ring goes out of our message, and our life loses its power. The servant whom the Holy Spirit is to use must resist the tyranny of overwork. He must resolve to be alone with God, even if he appear to rob his fellow-men of his services. It is said of that mighty spirit of the Middle Ages, S. Bernard of Clairvaux, that he found 'on the days when he spent most time in prayer and in study of the Bible, his letters were most rapidly written and most persuasive, and his own schemes were widened or lost in the greater purposes of God; anxiety was allayed, and the power of the Holy Spirit to which he had opened his heart was felt in every word he spake and in his very presence and look.' It was in the hours, ay, in the whole nights, passed in prayer in his church on a remote Cornish cliff that, perhaps, the greatest mission preacher of the century won that extraordinary power which

enabled him 'to bow the hearts of his hearers as the heart of one man.' It was in those jealously guarded times of communion with God, in the heart of busy London, and on the plains of China and North Africa, that General Gordon gained the gift of inspirng others with his own high enthusiasm, and of casting a spell alike over civilised and savage, over Christian and Mohammedan and heathen. 'A gift,' says Goethe, 'shapes itself in stillness, but a character in the tumult of the world.' And the gift of spiritual power is the child of solitude.

2. To solitary communion with God we must add united prayer. We must 'not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.' We must wait upon God with one accord as did the first disciples. Of them it is written, 'They were all with one accord in one place.' 'They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' And again: 'They lifted up their voices to God with one accord . . . and when they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and with great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection, and great grace was upon them all.' The united prayers of a company of devout men and women pleading with faith and fervour and perseverance for one object have power with God, and bring down into the Church fresh spiritual strength. F. J. CHAVASSE.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

The Comforter.
S. John xiv. 16.

Whom the devil tries to terrify and dispirit, Christ comforts; but whom the devil lulls into security and emboldens, Christ terrifies.

The Comforter.
S. John xiv. 16.

A comforter is a spiritual helper. We have no single word co-extensive in signification.

The Spirit of God.
S. John xiv. 16.

It is wisely and beneficially appointed that the outward helps and supports, by which in the first instance we are guided and upheld, should be taken away from us one by one, to the end that we may live more and more by faith in that which is invisible, . . . trusting and leaning on the wisdom and power of the Spirit of God.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Spirit helpeth. Rom. viii. 26.

As in the unconverted state, the influences of the unconscious bias of the soul invade the conscious daily life with demoniacal temptation, so, *vice versâ*, does the unconscious spiritual life of the converted man come as a guardian spirit to the help of the daily life.

The Holy Spirit. 1 Thess. i. 5.

The call does not come through every sort of gospel preaching, but through preaching filled with the Spirit; and an essential point in the matter is the personal endowment of the preachers.

Ministration of the Spirit. 2 Cor. iii. 12-18.

We have:

The commendatory epistle, written on the Apostle's heart; and

The same written on the hearts of the Corinthians.

The contrast between this epistle of the Spirit on the heart, and the lifeless engraving upon the Sinaitic stones.

The grand figure of Moses with his face irradiated by divine glories.

The same figure multiplied in the Apostle and his brethren, with unveiled faces turned towards Christ, whose light transfigures them into the glorious image of Himself.

The Spirit of Truth. S. John xiv. 17.

The Holy Ghost is the living, personal, divine unity of complete revelation; and, as such, the Spirit of Truth (xv. 26; xvi. 13). He is the Spirit of Truth, inasmuch as he makes objective truth subjective in believers, in order to the knowledge of truth. Objectively He is the Spirit of God (Rom. viii. 14), and God Himself (Acts v.); the Spirit of the Father (S. Matt. x. 20); the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9); the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. iii. 17), the Holy Spirit (Acts ii.) Subjectively He is the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph. i. 17); the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind (2 Tim. i. 7); the Spirit of adoption, of prayer (Rom. viii. 15); the Spirit of sanctification (Rom. i. 4), of life (Rom. viii. 10), of meekness (1 Cor. iv. 21), of comfort (Acts ix. 31), of glory (1 Pet. iv. 14), of sealing, of the earnest of eternal life (Eph. i. 13, 14), of all Christian charismata (1 Cor. xii. 4). As the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost applies to believers the full truth of the perfect revelation of God in Christ.

Witness of the Spirit. Rom. viii. 16.

That the world deny any such testimony in the hearts of believers, and that they look on it with scorn and treat it with derision, proves only that they are unacquainted with it; not that it is an illusion. It is a sensible and true remark

of the French philosopher Hemsterhuis, in regard to certain sensations which he was discussing: 'Those who are so unhappy as never to have had such sensations, either through weakness of the natural organ, or because they have never cultivated them, will not comprehend me.'

Witness of Spirit.
1 Cor. ii. 4.

The witness of the Spirit is taken in a sense quite too limited, when it is taken as merely a practical testimony in the conscience, the feelings, the heart, and not at the same time as a testimony borne by the Spirit of God, as the Spirit of Truth, through the medium of the thoughts of men. We know that the chief witness, on which all else depends, is that which is borne in 'demonstration of power.'

The Holy Spirit.

One of the three great articles of the Christian faith is a belief in God the Holy Spirit, who, in answer to prayer, bestows upon us His supernatural guidance and assistance. Assuming this to be true, there remains no room for comparison between this and the influence of purely natural culture. It seems desirable to mention this, lest, in arguing upon other grounds, this momentous power in Christian faith should appear to be overlooked.

Pentecost.
Acts ii. 1-21.

Mark the case of the Divine Head of the Church in fixing special times for the communication of special blessings. We have here—

I. The largest possible opportunity. There are opportunities in every Divine providence. The days are not all alike to God. We would bind Him down to one day. But does He not come in upon birthdays, wedding days, days of deliverance, times of surprise, days of unusual sorrow? He takes up one day and holds it symbolically before us. What He does with that day He wants to do with all the others.

II. The largest memorial feast known to Israel. Associated with memories of bondage and deliverance, of Sinai and the giving of the law. At Pentecost all the sacrifices were offered.

III. The largest possible union:

1. Of nationalities.

2. Of desire. Note the word 'accord.' God has promised nothing to disunion. They were gathered with one accord; that is the permanent element in their union. They were also gathered in one place; that is the transient circumstance. The place is nothing (S. John iv. 21), the accord is everything.

IV. The largest possible endowment of the divine gift. They were all with one accord. The Spirit a common gift, bestowed not upon Apostles only, but upon the humblest in the Church.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Always interesting to observe how great promises are fulfilled. The very greatness of the promise necessitates fulfilment on a scale proportioned to it. There could be no commonplace realisation of such a promise as Christ had given to the Apostles. Nor was there For (ii. 4) 'suddenly there came a sound from heaven,' etc.

Learn:

1. How helpless we are in the matter of spiritual revivals.
2. The power of waiting.
3. How unmistakable is the gift of fire!

Pentecost and Babel.

Acts ii. 7-13.

I. 'ARE not all these Galileans?'

The world takes offence at the persons or the witnesses.

II. 'How hear we in our own tongue?'

It is arrested by the voice of conscience responding to the truth.

III. 'What meaneth this?'

It distrusts the issue of the ways of God.

IV. 'They are full of new wine.'

It mistakes the source of the operations of the Spirit.

Trinity Sunday

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	REV. IV. 1-11.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN III. 1-15.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	ISA. VI. TO VER. 11.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	GEN. XVIII. OR GEN. I. AND II. TO VER 4.
SECOND MORNING LESSON	REV. I. TO VER. 9.
SECOND EVENING LESSON	EPH. IV. TO VER. 17, OR S. MATT. III.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Apostolic Faith.

To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him.'—1 CORINTHIANS viii. 6.

PAUL deals here with one of the perplexing questions which arose out of the first contact of Christianity with the order of pagan society. The social life of a Greek city in the first century was inseparable from the worship of the Greek pantheon. The temples were centres of local festivity; the sacrifices in part supplied the market. Food which had been offered to the gods was set before guests at public entertainments, or consumed at the ordinary meals of the private family. Under these circumstances what, it was anxiously asked, was the duty of the members of the Church? A few years before the date of this Epistle it had been ruled by the Mother Church at Jerusalem that the Gentile converts of Syria and Cilicia must abstain from things offered to idols. Such abstinence was one of the 'necessary things,' the few positive rules of primitive Christianity. But as the gospel spread farther to the West, the problem grew more complicated and required independent treatment at the hands of the Apostle of the Gentiles. In this chapter S.

Paul girds himself to the task. His handling of the question is characteristic. He finds the true solvent in love, not in knowledge. Regard is to be had for the scruples, weak and groundless as they might be thought, of brother members of Christ who shrank from the touch of such 'pollutions of idols.' Care must be taken lest the indiscriminate exercise of Christian liberty should encourage less instructed converts to do violence to conscience. Theoretically, however, the answer was clear. No well-taught Christian could assign any direct significance to pagan worship. An idol as such is a nonentity in the spiritual order. To the heathen, indeed, these images represented realities, and realities of a baneful or awful character; 'the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons.' The Old Testament itself, notwithstanding its strict monotheism, might not have hesitated to describe the rulers of Israel as 'gods,' or the God of Israel as 'God of gods and Lord of lords.' But the illuminated conscience of the Christian Church knows nothing of secondary deities, whether in earth or in heaven; they find no place within the circle of Christian theology. To us there is one God and one Lord. Our one Lord is Jesus Christ; our one God is the Father, His Father and ours.

I. In these words we hear the echoes of a true Apostles' Creed. This creed is indeed imperfect, if we limit ourselves to the text, for it makes no mention of the Holy Spirit. A great preacher of the fourth century in quoting it adds, perhaps unconsciously,—'and one Spirit, in whom are all things.' But the purpose of the Apostle explains the omission in this context. Within this Epistle, but in another connection, we read of 'the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God,' as the source of the manifold gifts, ministrations, and energies of the Church. There can be no reasonable doubt that S. Paul would have given his ready assent to a creed which recognised three personal objects of Christian faith—One God, the Father; One Lord, Jesus Christ, and One Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God and of Christ.

Is this Apostolic faith in harmony with that which the Church puts into our mouths to-day? I do not ask whether it is identical in terms, but only whether it is substantially the same. The question is of great importance to us all, and it is one which ought to be frankly met.

That S. Paul's confession of faith agrees with the framework of the creeds known to us as the Nicene and the Apostles' needs no demonstration. The Western Creed, it is true, has dropped the reference to the Unity of God; possibly because in its terser form it assumes a truth which to all Christians is a truism. But in the Eastern Creeds the words of the Apostle are echoed with remarkable

fidelity. 'We believe in One God the Father Almighty, and in One Lord, Jesus Christ,' is the unbroken witness of more than eighteen Christian centuries; and he who rejects it withdraws himself from the Apostles' teaching and fellowship. Nevertheless, when we turn from the Nicene Creed to the Athanasian, we certainly seem to hear another, if not a discordant note. We hear no longer of 'One God, the Father,' but of 'One God in Trinity'; and instead of the contrast 'One God, and One Lord,' we learn that 'the Father is God, the Son is God; the Father is Lord, the Son Lord.' We are conscious that we are in the presence of a distinct conception of the Christian doctrine of God, and there is nothing in the later confession which helps us to discover how this conception is to be reconciled with the teaching of S. Paul. It is not only that the earlier Creeds neither speak of the Holy Trinity under that name, nor make any formal attempt to bring together the Three Persons whom they confess, into an essential unity. The divergence goes further. The lines on which they are drawn seem to exclude such an attempt, just as S. Paul's words seem to exclude it; for if the Father is the One God of the Church, how, it may be asked, can the Son and the Holy Ghost be God? We know, of course, that the great teachers of the ancient Church, to whom under God we owe the maintenance of the Nicene faith believed in a co-essential Trinity, and there are phrases in our present Eucharistic Creed which imply this; nevertheless, the old framework of the Creed, left by them untouched, bears witness to a theology which, if entirely Apostolic, is on the surface hard to reconcile with a trinitarian faith. Few thoughtful men can pass from the earlier Creed to the later without being conscious not merely of a change of tone—the substitution of a system of dogma for the first outburst of belief and hope—but of a change of thought affecting the fundamental verities of Christianity. An uneasy suspicion lurks in many minds that the primitive faith and the ecclesiastical dogma are, not only distinct, but hopelessly inconsistent. On this great Festival of the Holy Trinity it may not be unreasonable to spend a part of our time upon these anxious questionings.

S. Paul believed in One God, the Father. But could he have failed to see that when he continues, 'One Lord, Jesus Christ,' he concedes divine prerogatives to the Son? He who is 'Lord of lords' must needs be also God. If there is inconsistency in the Christian doctrine, it reaches further back than the fourth century; it is inherent in the most primitive of Christian creeds. Yet is it credible that so keen a thinker as S. Paul could have permitted himself to use language which he must have felt to be self-contradictory? Must we not fall back on the old explanation that the Apostle does not intend to exclude the Son from the Godhead of the Father, since he cannot

intend to exclude the Father from the sovereignty of the Son? The Father is the One God as distinguished from the objects of pagan worship, and not as contrasted with the Only Begotten. The Son is the One Lord as compared with created potentates, and not, assuredly, as having taken to Himself the Father's throne. Yet behind these thoughts there lies another, which must have been potentially present to the Apostle's mind, and it is the conception of the Athanasian Creed; the Father and the Son are One God, One Lord. Nor is it easy to understand how on any other hypothesis S. Paul could have justified his position as a Christian teacher. With his strongly monotheistic faith he yet claimed for Jesus Christ an absolute homage of heart and intellect, of conscience and of life, which no creature can properly demand or accept. The formula which expressed his Christianity was as comprehensive as it was brief. 'Jesus is the Lord.' No wonder that they said of him at Athens, 'He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange divinities.' And yet the Apostle himself neither saw the inconsistency nor allowed the conclusion. 'To us there is One God and One Lord.' Can we explain his conduct on any other supposition but this, that in the background of his thought there lay the absolute conviction that the Father and the Son are essentially One? It has been urged that the divine honour rendered to our Lord was regarded as paid to God, inasmuch as the Son is the representative and expression of the Divine Majesty. But the question remains how a monotheistic faith could have contemplated the transference of divine honours under any circumstances to a created representative of God. Is it conceivable that all power has been committed even for a season to a person external to the Divine Unity?

Such considerations (and I have purposely refused to appeal to later epistles of S. Paul by which they might have been largely extended) seem to leave no doubt that the Apostolic faith in One God, the Father, did not exclude belief in a plurality of Persons within the Unity of God. But may we not go a step further? Were not the Apostles in possession of a formal revelation of the doctrine? The words of Baptism anticipate the latest form of the Catholic faith. We are baptized by the command of Christ into the Name of the Three, and not into the names of One God and One Lord and One Spirit. And there is reason to believe that this formula, which is essentially trinitarian, was from the first pronounced in the hearing of every Christian at the moment of his admission into the Church. If, as the first Gospel leads us to believe, it was prescribed by our Lord in the presence of a concourse of His disciples including the Eleven, it seems impossible to suppose that such a sanction could have failed to secure for it immediate and general acceptance. An opposite conclu-

sion is sometimes drawn from the fact that the Acts describe Baptism as administered during the first days in the name of the Lord, or of the Lord Jesus. But the inference is insecure, for the teaching of the Apostles, which uses the same phrase, twice directs the precise words of Christ to be used in the ministration of this Sacrament.

Thus it may be assumed that the Christian belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost existed from the first in both the types which are familiar to us now. If in the words of S. Paul we seem to have the first germ of the Nicene faith, in the words of Christ Himself we have the germ of the faith known to us as the Athanasian. The inconsistency, if there be inconsistency, is primitive; it was not imported into the theology of the Church in the interests of a later dogmatism. No doubt such forms as the *Quicunque* have brought the difficulty to a head, but it must have existed from the first, though it was not felt. Yet can there have been any real discrepancy between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of S. Paul on this vital question? Identical the two statements are not; may not a fuller examination show that they are complementary views of the same eternal truth?

To us there is but One God, the Father. Yet we believe the Son to be God and the Holy Ghost God. A false monarchianism attempted to solve the problem by denying the distinctness of the Persons; but it did so at the sacrifice of much of the plainest teaching of Christ and of the Apostles. Arianism, insisting on the personal distinctness of the Three, fell back upon a practical polytheism. The Church refused to ignore either side of the truth, 'neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance': 'there is One Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but the Godhead is all One.' And as she reflected on the teaching of the New Testament two principles revealed themselves which went far, not indeed to explain a mystery as profound as the Life of God, but to refute the charge of inconsistency. She saw, in the first place, that though the whole Essence belongs eternally to each Person, yet it belongs to the Son and to the Spirit by the Father's gift. 'All things,' Christ had said, 'that the Father hath are Mine'; 'as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.' The Father is the One Fount and Source of Godhead; the Son is God and the Holy Ghost is God by the eternal communication to Each of the whole Nature of God. The Father is God, the Son is God of God, the Spirit of God proceeding from God. And looking again at the words of Christ recorded in the Fourth Gospel, the Church was led to observe another law (if I may so speak) which conditions the Triune life. 'Believe Me,' our Lord said, 'that I am in the Father and the Father in

Me.' 'There is, so to speak'—I quote the words of our great living interpreter of S. John—'an interchange of the energy of the Divine Life.' Elsewhere this mutual inexistence of the Divine Persons is regarded as the archetype of the spiritual unity of the Church. 'I pray (Christ says again) that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.' The author of this union of believers is the One Spirit who knits together the members of Christ, binding them all to the One Lord, and through Him to the One God and Father of all; and the result of the union is an interchange of love, of thought, and of service; 'we are members one of another.' It is the best earthly interpretation of the union of the Blessed Trinity, but it fails, as all created life must fail, to express the perfection of the Divine Archetype. The members of Christ possess a corporate life, but retain individuality; and between individuals there can be no actual interchange of essence. In God alone the Persons united are truly One, not only in love and will, but in the communion of an indivisible life. The infinite flood of the Divine Life flows eternally from the Father into the Only Begotten Son, and from the Father through the Son into the Holy Ghost. Yet in flowing forth the Divine Life is not parted from its source; 'the Godhead is all One, the Majesty co-eternal.' There are 'not Three Eternals,' 'not Three Incomprehensibles nor Three Uncreated, but One.' For the Source is one, and the Life that flows from it is indivisible.

It may be said that all such representations leave the mystery where it was. After all, the Divine Trinity is unthinkable. We may freely grant that it is so, and yet welcome the legitimate exercise of Christian thought which dispels the suspicion of inconsistency. Upon her own principles the Church can teach, as she was taught from the beginning, that there is One God, the Father, and yet that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are One God. And she can teach both these aspects of her faith without surrendering either the distinctness or the equality of the Persons. The Three are distinct, for Each possesses a property whereby, in Hooker's words, He really and truly differs from the other Two. The Three are coequal, for Each is God. The Three are One, for the Godhead of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is the Godhead of the Father indivisibly and eternally communicated.

II. Let us return to the creed of S. Paul to gather from it the bearing of the great Christian mystery upon the lesser mysteries of created life. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity has little interest, it will be said, for any but theologians. It deals with distinctions and definitions which, whatever measure of truth they may adumbrate, are concerned only with the interior life of Duty. For such studies

a busy and practical age has no leisure; the metaphysical speculations which supplied mental food to the fourth century fail to satisfy or stimulate the appetite of the nineteenth. The revelation of the baptismal formula may still appeal to the clerical intellect; the lay mind is satisfied with the Sermon on the Mount, and the only side of Christianity for which we can hope to enlist general sympathy is that which aims at the raising of society or of personal life.

S. Paul anticipates this objection. To him the Christian doctrine of God was far from being an abstruse and unpractical philosophy. He sees that it stands in a direct connection with all life and thought. The light which our faith throws upon the awful depths of the Eternal and Infinite life is reflected back upon the world and upon ourselves. The revelation of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit interprets for us the origin and the law of every created existence.

'To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him.' The Father, as He is the source of Godhead, is also the origin of all which is not God. Here is the Apostolic doctrine of Creation. Later creeds tell us at once more or less. 'The Father Almighty,' they teach, 'is Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.' S. Paul uses similar language where his object is to protest against the gnosis which interposed created agents between the Creator and the cosmos. But when he limits himself to the fundamental articles of the faith, his words are at once simpler and more scientific. He is content to refer all things to one ultimate cause, and to identify the First Cause with the living God, the Father of Christ and of the Church. Let the process have been what it may, by which the world has become what we find it, it had a beginning; and its origin was the One Supreme Will of the Infinite and uncreated life.

Elsewhere the Apostle describes the relations of God to the creature in the comprehensive formula, 'Of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things.' Here, where he distinguishes the Persons, he distributes the relations. Creation is of the Father, through the Son. The Father is the originating, the Son the efficient cause. This distribution is not exclusively Pauline; it is to S. John we owe the *locus classicus* upon the mediation of the Son in the genesis of the Universe. All things, S. John teaches, were made by the Word; the whole order of creation came into existence through Him who in the fulness of time was a Man included within the limits of His own creation. A third writer of the Apostolic age has the same doctrine to teach: 'God spake to us in a Son, through whom also He made the world' in the successive stages of its life. Whether they call the sublime Mediator of creation Lord or Word

or Son, the primitive teachers of the Church were agreed in attributing all creative work to His agency. Yet He is not merely the agent, but the living sphere of the energies of God, for S. Paul teaches with equal confidence that 'in Him all things were created.' Nor is His work exhausted by a single act or in the first stage of the world's history. The Sabbath of God to which Genesis bears witness is not inconsistent with a continuous activity, 'My Father worketh hitherto (Christ testifies) and I work:' 'in Him,' S. Paul proceeds, 'all things consist.' The Christian's creed leaves room for the results of physical science; the doctrine of the immanent Word corresponds to the doctrine of natural evolution. The Deist, stopping at the words 'of whom are all things,' is compelled to contemplate the spectacle of a creation left to itself by an absentee Creator; the Christian, believing also in the Son 'through whom are all things,' understands how God can transcend the world and yet be present and operative in all the fulness of its manifold life.

But S. Paul's far-reaching thought carries us yet further. He sees a new creation rising in the heart of the old, a creation of which the Christian Society was already the nucleus and the promise. There is sublimity in the faith which could dare not merely to hope but to believe that the handful of men, mostly of the illiterate and servile class, who at Ephesus or Corinth had learnt to confess one God and one Lord, were the beginnings of a new order which in the course of the ages would become the flower and crown of all the works of God. Yet this conception seems to be present to the mind of the Apostle when he adds 'and we through Him,' 'and we unto Him.' The relations of the Holy Trinity to the Church are partly paralleled by Its relations to the world, partly in contrast with them.

The new creation is, as the old, produced through the Son. Again He is the efficient cause. Through Him the Church has come into existence; through Him its life is sustained and developed. We are accustomed to connect the mediation of our Lord in this sense exclusively with His Incarnate life. Historically, no doubt, the Church is the direct fruit of the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, the Ascension. We are what we are as Christians through the Incarnate Son, who for us men and for our salvation was made Man, and gave His Flesh for the life of the world, and raised it up from the dead as the firstfruits of restored humanity. We are through Him, inasmuch as the Spirit, by which we have been regenerated and by which we live, was sent from the Father by the risen and ascended Lord. We are 'through Him,' inasmuch as our position as reconciled sons in the family of God rests upon His continued mediation; no man cometh unto the Father but by Him who is the living way. Yet a further analysis shows that the Incar-

nation itself is one of the divine activities which belong to the Everlasting Son as the mediating principle in God. We can see the fitness if not the necessity of the divine order which places the restoration of all things in the hands of Him by whom all things were made. We can see that God's eternal purpose of Incarnation could only have been fulfilled in that Person in God who is the Word and revealer of the Father, because He is at once the effulgence of the glory and the expression of the essence of God. Thus the relation of the Son to man and to the world is seen to be based upon the eternal relation of the Son to the Father.

When we think of the Father in connection with the Church, we find ourselves carried beyond the relation by which He is linked with the universe. With the rest of the creatures we are 'of Him;' but as members of Christ, S. Paul teaches, we have a further privilege: we are 'unto,' we are 'for' Him from whom we draw our being. Potentially this privilege belongs to every creature of God: 'unto Him are all things'; 'all things serve Him.' Our faith grasps this law of the universe, but it is seldom that in the complex workings of the divine order we can catch sight of the oneness of its aim. On the contrary, in the world as we see it, and know it, self-interest appears to be the rule of life; the struggle for existence seems to crush out any higher purpose; in man, the only free agent whose conduct we can observe, the prevailing attitude towards God is one of indifference, if not of positive aversion. The world needs to be reconciled to its Creator. S. Paul answers that the reconciliation has been effected in principle by the Incarnation and the Cross, and teaches us to look forward to the ultimate recovery of the creation to its splendid office of ministering to God. Meanwhile the Church witnesses to the great end of created life. The divine Architect has set up on earth a temple upon which is inscribed the characters that all can read, *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. The Church has no other reason for her existence; she is 'for God,' or she is false to her mission. 'We are a kind of firstfruits of His creatures,' not merely His by creation, but consecrated to His service by special acts of dedication. The Christian life, so far as it is true to its ideal, is the best interpretation of S. Paul's meaning, unless we prefer to seek it in the history of the great Christian society, marking how in the midst of much human infirmity and sin, the progress of the Church has upon the whole been identified with the progress of righteousness and truth and love. 'For God' is her watchword, and if the call has not always been obeyed, it is only in her camp that it has been heard. But it must not be forgotten, in the impatience of our limited powers, that the Church and the individual Christian are both in the infancy of an eternal life. There is a vast reserve of strength

in all inspired descriptions of the Church's destiny. We are but learning as yet what it is to consecrate to God the fulness of the powers which He has given. When the lesson has been fully learnt, the purpose of the mission of the Son and of the Spirit will have been fulfilled. 'Then shall the Son also Himself be subject to Him that subjected all things unto Him, that God may be all in all.' The Church refuses indeed to draw from these profound words the hasty inference that the Son will in ages to come abdicate the divine glory which He had with the Father before the world was. She cannot admit the thought of a change, at however remote a period in the inner life of God; the *Gloria Patri*, the *Ter Sanctus* will rise eternally. But the relations of God and of Persons in God towards the creature may change with the changed conditions of created life. Across the ages we can dimly discern the approach of a restoration of all things, when distinctions of source and cause shall have been merged in the attainment of the end.

I have endeavoured to show that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is neither inconsistent with the primitive faith nor alien to the field of human life and the wider range of human thought. It is not in the interests of dogma, considered as such, that the Church instituted or has retained this one festival of dogmatic belief. The festival was not the child of the age which celebrated the final triumph of orthodoxy over Arianism; the conclusions of the Church had been tested by centuries of Christian experience before they were enshrined in a yearly commemoration. Nor can it be urged that our Anglican reformers preserved it for us merely because they were reluctant to break loose from a mediæval tradition. It was felt by them (and in this they were at one with the greatest Christian teachers of ancient as well as of mediæval times) that the doctrine which Trinity Sunday proclaims is the expression of a revealed fact, the greatest, most tremendous, most far-reaching of facts. The expression is necessarily imperfect, because neither language nor thought can be adequate to the task of interpreting God. We see Him only in the dim mirror of a finite intelligence; our faith is an enigma. Attention has lately been drawn to the debt which the terminology of Christian dogma owes to Greek philosophy. Theology, so far as I can see, has no interest in concealing the fact. It is enough to point out that the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the One God, the Lord, the One Spirit of the Church, was first published to the world not at Athens or at Alexandria, but on the Mount of Olives and by the lips of Christ. If we value the ecclesiastical dogma based upon His words, it is because it is the only formula which includes with scientific completeness the whole teaching of the New Testament. Other systems, and there have been many, lose sight of one or more

of the revealed facts. Moreover, the long experience of the Church has shown that any departure from the form in which the doctrine was ultimately cast issues in the loss of some part of the truth committed to her charge. It is for these reasons that we cherish the precise words of the ancient theology, and not because of a finality which we imagine to be inherent in them. 'When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.' But to abandon the partial in the hope of reaching the perfect is not a sound policy for seekers after truth.

Meanwhile the partially ascertained truth is sufficient for the inspiration and guidance of life. Bishop Butler met the deists of his day with the warning that the doctrine of the Trinity, if true, carried with it moral obligations which it is unsafe to neglect. 'No one can say what may follow, not only the obstinate, but the careless disregard to (Christ) in those high relations' which follow from His divine Sonship and mediation. 'For aught we know, the judicial punishment of the future life may be . . . the natural consequence . . . of men's violating or disregarding the relations which God has placed them in here, and made known to them.' To our own eye it is more natural to inquire what may be expected to follow from the acceptance of the doctrine; whether it is one of those great religious ideas which really tend to elevate and transfigure mankind. The question may perhaps best be answered by another. Unitarian Christianity has, in various forms, competed with the Catholic faith; but with what success? It has attained and held a number of adherents of blameless life and keen or cultivated intellect. But among the masses it has made little way. It has had no voice for the weary and heavy laden, for the weak and illiterate, for the outcast and the lost, for the sick and the dying. *Media vita in morte sumus*; the human spirit needs a faith which can promise to uphold it in the last conflict, whether the end comes under the form of a prolonged illness or of a lightning flash. Undogmatic Christianity cannot boast of having been, like the Catholic Church, a fruitful mother of Saints. So far as experience has gone, a Christianity without an Incarnation, without an Atonement, without a Resurrection of the body, without a Pentecost, is a Christianity denuded of its powers for the regeneration of human life. But these doctrines, so full of spiritual vitality, depend upon the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The whole fabric of the faith which has changed the world rests on the revelation of the one name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The whole course of its individual life is moulded by the consciousness of the threefold relationship to God. Only in the power of a Spirit, who is truly the Spirit of God and yet dwells within the temple of the human body, only through the mediation of a Son who

is perfect God and has been made Man, can the spirit of man return with confidence to its Father in heaven and live.

PROFESSOR SWETE.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Door Opened in Heaven.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven. Rev. iv. 8.

I. AND after this, a door is opened in heaven. When we have seen the Son of Man—when we have heard the Spirit's voice—then, as the Son of Man said in the days of His Flesh, 'Thou shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily, I say unto you, henceforth ye shall see heaven open.' Heaven opens, not only to let out its glory, and show us, as He then said, 'the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man,' but to let us look in, and behold the unutterable glory that dwells there only, the source from which that other glory flows which is manifested on the earth. In the Son of Man dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily—we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father. But yet, because that glory dwelt in a bodily tabernacle, it has not been seen in all its fulness; we have seen enough of it to serve as food for faith, but not enough to be really worthy to be called a sight. To behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord is enough to change us into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord; but still it is only in a glass that we see, not face to face. He that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father, but yet only by reflection; we see the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, but yet not Himself.

II. But the veil still hangs before the holiest place of all; no one has ever entered in there but the High Priest alone, with the Blood of the one great Sacrifice of Atonement for sin, through which alone any of our sacrifices are acceptable. We see the gorgeous colours of the veil itself, and can trace the figures of the cherubim that are wrought in it, that is, we can discern the loveliness of a perfectly holy life like that which Jesus lived on the earth, and can even discern that it had in it something more than earthly, something spiritual, angelical; we know, as Nicodemus knew, that no man

could do what Jesus did, except God were with him. This is perhaps what He meant by those words we spoke of, 'the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.' But though the knowledge of His life is to us an opening of heaven, a revelation of the things of God, it still is something short of the perfect sight of God Himself. We desire to enter into the holiest place—not presumptuously, like King Uzziah, but by the Blood of Jesus, passing through the veil of His Flesh till we see all the fulness of the mystery which that Flesh hides—God as He is in Himself. And the mystery of to-day gives us, if not admission within the veil, at least a drawing aside of it; if not a sight of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see, still a glimpse of His glory, that is, a promise and earnest of the direct sight of the whole. There is opened in heaven, not a window only, to let God's gifts be poured down, but a door through which they on earth may enter in.

III. 'The first voice which I heard,' says S. John, 'was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.' And the voice which he heard was itself one of the things which must be hereafter—the time will come when we all shall hear it as he heard it. 'The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,' so another Apostle tells us, 'with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall be ever with the Lord.' 'The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.' Until that change is effected we are not able to see Him; but we wait all the days of our appointed time till our change come, feeding our hopes on the knowledge now given us of Him whom then we hope to see. By the Son who is with us, by the Spirit who is in us, we are taught how the Father, of whom and from whom They are, is with Them, in Them, one with Them; we fix our thoughts upon the Life and Death and Resurrection of the Son, we open our hearts to the influence of the Spirit; and so, even on earth, though we cannot yet see God, we learn to look for Him, we prepare ourselves for His sight. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'; and faith in the Holy Trinity is a power to purify the heart, and, so far as it does so, it gives such a knowledge of God as may be almost called seeing Him who is invisible. By such faith and hope and purity let us prepare to see Him. We expect one day to hear the voice as of a trumpet; we hope and pray that we may hear His voice saying to us, 'Come up hither,' and we know that if once we are called up hither, we shall

be ever with the Lord—more than that, 'we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' 'And every man,' S. John goes on, 'that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure.' If we believe in God, the Father of Jesus Christ the Holy—if we believe in Him who has given us a Holy Spirit to sanctify us—then, if we desire to come to Him and see His face, we also must be holy as He is holy, perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. Our faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, if it is to lead to the sight of Him, must be effectual to cleanse our hearts from all uncleanness, must drive out from them any inclination to the vanities of the world or the lusts of the flesh. Into the heaven where God is to be seen, into which this faith opens the door, 'there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.' Hear then the words of the Lamb Himself, of Him that hath the key of David, who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth: 'I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are they that do His commandments,' or rather, 'blessed are they that wash their garments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the City.'

W. H. SIMCOX.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Need of Dogma.

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. S. John iii. 5.

I. SOME causes of the objection to dogmatic teaching.

1. Wealth, or its equivalent in power, social position, etc. There are many like Nicodemus, who, while secretly feeling the claims of Christ, realise that they are quite incompatible with retaining their present selfish, worldly, luxurious mode of living; and they come to see if some exception cannot be made in their case, and a laxer rule in faith and morals tolerated.

2. Cowardice. There are those, like Nicodemus, who wish to order their inner lives, to some extent at least, by Christ's laws, but whose social or political position brings them in contact with others,

who openly disregard such restraints, and are practically the enemies of Christ; and while these men are unhappy in this atmosphere, they have not courage to stand up for Christ, as, for example, Nicodemus in the Sanhedrin.

3. Sloth. Again, there are those like Nicodemus who, recognising the beauty and truth of the religion of Jesus, as taught in its fulness, and meaning some day really to break from all else and give themselves to Him, from sloth put off the necessary effort, and, while holding the faith in theory, do not practise it; *e.g.*, men who believe in Absolution, but have not yet made their First Confession. Nicodemus, when another of his own order, Joseph of Arimathæa, set him the example, was bold to confess Christ, but how much of blessing he lost in those three years of struggling against conscience!

II. Christ wants our souls, not our patronage:

1. It was to save souls from sin that Christ lived and died, not to rally around him the rich and powerful of this world; and there is only one way to help the soul, by the use of the Sacraments, through which the grace of Christ is conveyed to it.

2. Some are not sure whether they accept all the doctrines of the Church, and uncertainty about their *credenda* often leads to uncertainty about *agenda*, or, as S. James puts it, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways' (S. James i. 8). Want of dogmatic faith leads to laxity of morals.

3. But does not the fault rest largely on the clergy for not teaching with authority what such men must believe and do? Some excuse themselves by quoting S. Paul, 'I have fed you with milk, and not with meat' (1 Cor. iii. 2), but S. Paul told them distinctly it was because they were carnal; he did not recommend that diet for earnest Christians, and he certainly would never have been satisfied to have allowed his flock to continue on it.

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

Trinity in Unity.

How can these things be? S. JOHN iii. 9.

HOW far is the question of the text a right question? and where does it begin to err? It may err in spirit, and it may err in direction.

I. Sometimes it is the question of mere haste, indifference, impatience, petulance, or vanity. A man who has not had one serious thought, nor breathed one earnest prayer; a man who has never

given himself to the study of divine truth, or so much as opened for information the sure word of revelation; will say to you, with a positiveness which on any other subject would be felt to be ludicrous, 'I never can believe in the doctrine of the Trinity: I never can believe that there are Three Persons in One God: it is a contradiction in terms to say that Three are One or that One is Three.' In vain do we urge upon him the plain words of Scripture with reference to the divine attributes of Christ, and to the distinct agency of the Holy Spirit. In vain do we remind him of the inadequacy of human language to express matters so far beyond our comprehension. In vain do we assure him that Person and Substance are admitted to be most imperfect expressions of that distinction which is yet felt to be both scriptural and reasonable. In vain do we entreat him to use what words he will to express better than we have done the thing itself, the eternal, the essential verity, which lies under the Church's enunciation of the Christian doctrine concerning our God. To all such explanations he turns a deaf ear, and has no answer but one to the faith in which ages and generations have lived and died, How can these things be? We venture to say that that man has erred in spirit. He has not brought to the consideration of the things of God a preparation which all would judge essential to the understanding of the things of man. He has sat in judgment upon the most profound subject on which the thought of man can be exercised, without one hour's real preparation or one moment's honest study. If that man had read with anxiety and prayer that one discourse of our Saviour from which we have quoted, he would have seen that it was impossible to disregard the phenomena which it presents. He would have seen that the language there used makes it futile for any Christian theology to turn aside from the mystery which it presupposes. The question, How can these things be? is on his lips the confession of his incompetency and the parade of his presumption. God keep us evermore from that spirit in the investigation of His truth!

II. But the error of the question may be an error not of spirit, but, as we have called it, of direction. A person who says concerning the revelation of the Trinity, How can these things be? may possibly be guilty only of mistaking the direction in which we ought to seek God's truth. We may be expecting to understand, not the fact, but the method, of the co-existence of the three Divine Persons in the one essence of God. We may be sincerely desirous of light; we may be refusing no word of God; we may be studying the Bible diligently, and availing ourselves of every help to that study which we can find or make. The mistake is, that we do not think it honest to accept a revelation till we can comprehend it. It is no necessity

of mine to understand the nature of the agency by which divine help comes to me any more than to understand the way in which food nourishes or wine cheers or air refreshes. The purpose of revelation is practical, not theoretical. If I refuse to act upon God's Word till I can explain to the satisfaction of the intellect all that surrounds and all that bears upon and all that is connected with the life-giving truth itself revealed, then indeed I shall die before I know, and be lost before I have set myself to seek salvation.

What to me, let each one ask himself, is the doctrine of the Father? Is He my Father? does my heart so cry to Him? does my life so represent Him? What to me is the doctrine of the Son? Is His divinity my stay? is His humanity my comfort? What to me is the doctrine of the Spirit? Is His presence my soul's life? is His operation my life's holiness? And what to me is the doctrine of the Three in One? Do I so trust in the Son as never to sever Him from the Father? and so trust in the Spirit as to seek Him ever through the Son? This if I do, I am already walking in the light, and hereafter I shall see it. This if I do, though I cannot yet answer the question, How can these things be? I can at least give a reason for the hope that is in me, and believe that what I know not now I shall know hereafter. The noonday of my illumination is not yet: but already the Sun of Righteousness is risen upon me, and life and immortality are brought to light by His gospel.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Regeneration.

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of . . . the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. S. JOHN iii. 5.

I. SITTING listlessly by the seashore one picks up a stone,—and a jelly-fish.

Difference in structure; the one made, the other born!

Follow up from each the line of development: the divergence constantly increasing: they belong to different 'kingdoms.'

Christ teaches that in spiritual things the stream cannot rise above the fountain.

('As many as received Him,' etc. 'Whosoever is born of God doth not,' etc. 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision,' etc.)

Entrance into the superior kingdom is by re-birth.

II. The active agent in this re-creation is a mysterious personality called the Holy Ghost.

[Some things which only a 'ghost' can do: coming and going in the secret places of the soul, independently of material conditions!]

The original creative force which brooded upon the face of the waters.

III. Regeneration by the Holy Ghost is the point where the old development is arrested and the new sets in.

Two things mark the divine access.

1. There must be a suitable point of contact.

2. Like natural birth, for a considerable period it is unsuspected by its subject.

The moment of spiritual birth obscure.

In a certain sense it is always in Baptism—because there the conditions are all present.

But, as in natural life, one can enjoy, suffer, grow or die before he knows he is born!

'The vision is not for an appointed time, but at the end it will speak and not lie; if it tarry, wait for it; at the end it will come and not tarry.'

S. D. M'CONNELL.

Regeneration, and what it is.

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do those miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him, etc. S. John iii. 1-15.

IN speaking of regeneration, we will divide our subject into two parts.

1st, The nature of it. 2nd, The necessity of it.

I. Had the eternal Word of God never appeared as a light in this world of darkness, this word Regeneration would certainly never have passed the lips of man. Man could not have conceived it of his own imagination, and all the riches of his knowledge will not enable him to understand it. It was the Word of God which introduced it into the world, and by that alone can it be explained to us. Let us then listen to that word.

Holy Scripture speaks of a certain change which must take place in men, and which is called regeneration. 'Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,' are the first and puzzling words with which our Saviour replies, as our text tells us, to the confession of faith made to Him by Nicodemus, and throughout the whole of the passage He continues to repeat their essential importance.

'According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration [the *laver* or *bath* of regeneration], and renewing of the Holy Ghost,' writes S. Paul to Titus (iii. 5).

And here, above all things, let us understand thoroughly that by this change in man, of which we have spoken, holy Scripture does not mean a mere moral improvement, or the rooting out of some one particular fault or sin, such as we, from our standpoint of wisdom, might call amendment. It was from this point of view that our Lord considered that Nicodemus regarded the subject; and to this day the idea of many Christians is the same. But such a conception of the real nature of regeneration is beneath the dignity of God and of His holy Word, and is an abomination in His sight.

God's working in man extends to his entire being, to his knowledge as well as to his will, and holy Scripture impresses upon us continually that a so-called moral enlightenment is not sufficient for man, but that he must be strengthened by life and light from on high. Nicodemus and this blind world seek in Jesus nothing more than a 'teacher sent from God,' but the Bible points us to Him as the Saviour of the world, full of life-creating power. There we find regeneration defined as a complete transformation of the inner man, both as regards his moral perceptions and his will. The very expression 'regenerate,' that is, born anew, or born of God, conveys that idea. To be born is to be changed from a state of nonentity into a state of being: it is not a modification or a change of destination of the same condition, but it is one fundamentally and essentially different.

In this word regeneration we are taught plainly and pointedly that this higher existence into which man must be born, is no more his own work or brought about by his own power than is the earthly existence of which by his natural birth he becomes possessed.

II. When we reflect upon the glory and dignity of the state for which our race is destined, and see the working by which that state is to be attained, clearly put before us as it is in the passages we have quoted, surely we need not begin to question the *necessity* of that work. It is a bad sign in us when we eagerly inquire about the needfulness of regeneration, and yet so willingly do without it. Holy Scripture speaks most emphatically upon the absolute necessity of it (S. John iii. 3): 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee,' are the twice repeated words of our Saviour, 'except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'; and they find an echo in those of the Apostle S. Paul (Gal. vi. 15), 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.'

Now this necessity for a new birth becomes very clear to us if we reflect, first, upon the purpose of the Almighty God in sending His

dear Son into the world; and, secondly, endeavour to attain to a clear knowledge of ourselves.

God sent His Son into this world in order to found a kingdom, not an earthly but a heavenly kingdom. The question was not merely how to improve, by wiser laws and regulations, the already existing kingdom of mankind in all its social relations of life, but how to found, so to speak, a colony of heaven upon earth. The elements and conditions of this kingdom were not to be of earthly nature, not of this world, but brought down into this sensuous world from the super-sensuous one. Therefore this kingdom of God was to be one invisible to bodily eyes, its ruler invisible, its strength and might invisible, but not the less a real kingdom.

And the citizens of this kingdom, who and what should they be? None but the holy angels and holy men. The angels may well enter immediately, inasmuch as their very nature is heavenly, and therefore fitted to dwell there; their powers and inclinations are heavenly, their life is one lived in the unseen world. But we men, do we carry in us the elements necessary to compose this unseen kingdom? Have we the capability of living in the invisible, as in the visible? Have we the power of drawing from thence the sustenance necessary for that inner life, and of seeking that very life in the unseen world which is no mere empty dream, but something real and substantial; not tainted and impure, the production of man's egotism and craving after enjoyment, but pure, holy, and heavenly? Is the whole impulse of our being towards this divine kingdom, this world of truth, and of all real blessings which are in God for evermore? Have we eyes and a heart for heaven? Is love, in the fullest sense of the word, love to God, the ruling influence of our souls?

The answer to all these questions is plain to every one of us who understands his own heart. There he may read what our Lord answered Nicodemus: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' We must be born of the Spirit if we are to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and the birth of the Spirit is the new birth. We cannot surely wonder, then, that holy Scripture speaks of regeneration in a way that seems inexplicable to the natural understanding; rather let us take to ourselves our Lord's words to Nicodemus, 'Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.'

Regeneration begins with the first earnest stirring of repentance in the heart. It develops itself further as we learn to know sin as sin, as we acquire faith in the Saviour from sin; it goes on to a clearer and more fruitful knowledge of ourselves and of God, in the person of Christ, to a burning love towards Him, and through that love, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to new obedience and holiness before

God, till at length, in the carnal man, as in the bosom of the mother, the heavenly man is perfectly matured, attains to his full stature (as Christ did in our flesh), and is thereby perfected and prepared for his new birth into the light of the world to come through his death to this world. This is the way of regeneration in every individual, and in the whole earthly creation. We must all be born again into that glorified, heavenly nature, and on that day of the manifestation of the 'glorious liberty of the children of God,' for which 'the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth,' and which holy Scripture, in the words of our blessed Lord, speaks of as the regeneration out of the old heaven and the old earth, will burst forth a new heaven and a new earth. R. ROTHE.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

God's Remnant.

Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof. ISAIAH vi. 11-13.

THE remnant! The seed of life still left buried in the heart of the dead trunk of a dead oak, a few grapes that yet can be gleaned after a storm has swept the vines, the shaking of the olive-trees after the harvest has stripped them bare—here is the distinctive and cardinal conception of God's dealings, God's methods, with man in history, which is stamped upon the earlier and later Isaiah! Here is the secret interpretation of the divine judgments and divine deliverances which we specially owe to the Jew and to the Bible! Here is the doctrine by which the prophets read into consistency the conflicting contrasts of the human drama, its splendid hopes and its petty achievements, its aspirations and its disasters, its promises and its ruin, its optimism and its pessimism! The glories that flashed before them were reconciled with the dismay which they found encompassing them, by this one solution, 'the remnant'! And as this doctrine of the remnant forms the very core of the Old Testament message, so it is taken up into the very innermost heart of the Christian creed. It is exactly this which is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

He is the absolute and ultimate example of God's work being done through the remnant, of God's sparing the whole tree because its life is yet in it, of God being content with His sparing gleaning of the grapes, of the last shaking of the olive-tree.

Through the idea of the remnant we pass to the innermost secrets of our creed—atonement, sacrifice, intercession, pardon in the blood, the new Adam, the Church, the Sacraments.

I. It is the Jew's great insight into facts which detects God's working by a remnant. His intense optimism gave him belief of what God would do actually for Israel; his intense realism forced him to recognise the facts which were so terribly against his belief. How would God secure His purpose and save His name? It would be because He would never quite let it go. God might retreat in face of the weight and forces of wickedness until He seemed to the ordinary enemy to have been pushed out of the scene; but no, He has secured for Himself this secret foothold, a hidden knot, a tiny few. Yes, it might be but one loyal soul, His one and only servant of whom we read this afternoon; some one man whom all disregarded and despised, rejected of men, no form and comeliness that we should desire Him. They had passed Him over, deeming Him stricken, afflicted of God, a man of sorrows, led like a lamb to the slaughter, cut off from the land of the living, so that they hid their faces from Him. And yet it was He, it was the one true Israelite, it was the Remnant, and in Him all might be recovered, for He in His loneliness is not alone. He is all Israel; He is the sole representative who sums up the entire people. As long as He stands firm the purposes of God for the whole people can go forward. The divine hold on His purpose is not lost in Him, through Him, who is the only Israelite without guile. He could make manifest the will with which He had chosen His people as the organ of His manifestation. From that one spot recovery could begin—out of that one Remnant. The body is sound there, though sick in every other part; that one sound spot can become a source of spreading health; the entire will of Israel concentrated in this one solitary life can go out from its refuge and lay hold of the whole people; the leaven can leaven the whole lump. And so He saves the day for all; He is the Atonement; He is the sacrifice who bears in His own person the full burden of the people's salvation. The Remnant! the seed of life, under the cloud of death, which so long as it is not killed may bud again, and grow, and spread, and put out leaves until the birds come and build in the branches. So the prophet sees death all round, sees cities wasted without inhabitant, sees land deserted and land desolate, men removed far away, and a great forsaking in the midst of the land. And yet he also sees more, sees that there

shall be yet in it a tenth, and it shall return even as the oak when it casts its leaves, for one saith, 'Destroy it not, for there is blessing in it'—so the Holy Spirit shall be the substance thereof.

II. Christian Onesidedness. We are Aryan, not Semites, by nature, by blood. We think with the Greek, not with the Jew; and, moreover, Greek culture has historically determined our logical methods. And so we, too, are so prone to identify ideals with ideas rather than with facts. Ideals are still for us abstracts that rise far above actual reality; not energetic forces that lodge themselves inside real things, and lift them by their impulsive power to higher uses. Our method makes still for personification rather than for transfiguration, and so we still miss half the message of the Bible. We forget that Christianity is the revealed decision of God in favour of the Jewish mode of thinking, and we may note a practical instance in the very way in which we are apt to handle this very doctrine of the remnant. It corresponds, as we see, to our conception of 'an invisible Church' of the saints, the Church of all faithful people scattered throughout the world. And when we get hold of that idea we are apt to pit it against the visible Church. The invisible doctrine condemns the mixed visible body; it shakes itself free, it spurns identification, it offers itself to us in the guise of a relief, a refuge from all that shocks and wounds us in the actual facts of the Church's history. It calls for us to come out of the unclean thing. We may forget the base and corrupt visible body on earth by spiritual removal into the mystical unseen, commune with all, however few they be, who hold the truth in purity and love. That is our way of handling it, the way of abstract personification, the way of contrast between the ideal and the actual. That is the exact contrary of the Jewish treatment. The Jew lays hold of the idea of the heavenly remnant, not to ignore the visible, but to justify it; not to spurn the actual, but to redeem it. The existence of the invisible soul of Israel serves to rescue the visible body of Israel. He could not surrender the earthly, the actual, the concrete, the seen. To surrender these was, for God's purpose, to fail, for God's purpose identified itself with the living flesh and blood of a living people—Israel. Israel was always failing to correspond with God's purpose. That was its misery! But in spite of its sin God could be justified in still holding on to visible Israel by virtue of the holy seed who afforded Him still a housing where He could await the day of recovery, and who served as the actual and living pledge that that day of recovery would yet come!

The existence of the leaven is a promise of sanctification for the whole unleavened lump. The holiness of the firstfruits gave holiness to the entire crop. Therefore the corruption of the visible body

does not avail to wreck it, for its salt that is in it is good, and will save it yet. The Jew holds fast to the remnant because he holds fast to the visible. The visible on the surface denies his hopes, his ideas, and his love, but he sees buried within the power of future redemption, and the hidden substance of the future life: 'Its seed is in it.' Therefore he loves it still and holds on to it still; and what he did he bids us do. So full of wounds, this actual Church is a real fact, is nevertheless for us still the Body of Christ, and the Bride, because in it we see the powers of the eternal love rescued for her, retained in her by the loyalty of the few holy souls who never bow the knee to Baal. That invisible body of saints is the purifying salt by which the visible body is saved from corruption. The invisible Church, far from escaping from the visible acts, has its internal redemption and its perpetual justification; and the deeper our belief, therefore, in the invisible remnant, the stronger grows our belief in the visible body for which they stand sponsor and pledge. They stand, I say, those saints of God, so few and so rare; but, indeed, there is but one saint! All our remnant is reduced to that; the seed that is in this tree is Jesus only. Here is its substance, here its life, for the sake of which God says of it, 'Destroy it not, for its seed is in it.' Invisible this remnant of ours, hidden with God in heavenly places, hidden from our eyes by blocks of intervening evil, by the treachery of His chosen people, by the faults of this Church; yet Himself the prevailing pledge, housed deep in the heart of the visible body, by virtue of which its sins cannot blot out its claim, nor ruin its hope, nor strip it of sanctity. Verily, we cry again and again, If God had not left us this remnant, we should have been as Sodom and Gomorrah. But our remnant is always left to us, for He is Christ the Lord, and in Him this wasted Israel in its actual poverty, in its visible weakness, in its concrete grossness, its sin as it may be, as it will be, is what it might be if its invisible resources were given full play, and it were filled out and possessed by this glorious life. We see the visible Church still transfigured by the Christ, the Bride of the Lamb, robed for the Bridal—she has only to be true to herself, and it will be done.

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

TRINITY SUNDAY

Justice.

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. GEN. xviii. 19.

I. JUSTICE is the very ground and motive upon which the duty of love and self-sacrifice is based. Christ claims our love even to Himself as but a just return; we love Him because He first loved us. If we should be tender with our brethren, considerate, not extreme to mark what is done amiss, it is because we have learnt how much tenderness we need and have received, because our quickened conscience tells us how little fit we are to pass sentence on another's motives.

II. It is the principle to which the judge and the ruler must manifestly go back. Justice, in whosoever's hands, is not justice unless all the facts are taken into account. The light that Christianity has thrown on men's relations to one another and to God must colour the judgment and acts of judge and legislator; but they are bound, the facts once seen, to look simply to the sentence of Justice herself. An individual dealing with wrongs done to himself can never put himself altogether aside. He may appeal to justice—very often it may be his imperative duty to do so—but he must never do so without some self-questioning, some self-distrust, some endeavour to put himself in another's place.

III. Where there is no risk of its hardening us, where it acts not to limit kindly action but to stimulate and compel it, there surely the sense of justice speaks to us with the voice of God. It speaks the more plainly, the more forcibly, that it speaks in language which every son of Adam understands, that it appeals to a standard which even the heathen world acknowledged. DEAN WICKHAM.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Spiritual Eyesight.

Eyes have they, but they see not. PSALM CXV. 5.

TO have eyes, and yet not to see, in body and in spirit, that and some of the several stages of it are the points which I ask you to consider. I join intentionally in one sequence the eyes of the body and the eyes of the spirit. We are familiar with at least one part of the name of a great book,—the Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the constitution and course of nature. We are, I hope, at least equally familiar with the idea of the analogy of the unseen to the seen, the spiritual to the material; with the idea that one great unity of purpose has been impressed, by the Divine Framer of the universe, on all parts of that marvellous complexity, which in the present stage of its existence we call man.

I. Let me take first the eyes of the body, and illustrate my meaning, as to their seeing or not seeing, by one or two examples.

You have seen a ray of light caught by a prism by some skilful operator, and thrown on to a surface carefully prepared to receive it. It flashes upon your senses in bars of beauty, which give you a keen fresh thrill of delight each time you see them; to many eyes and many minds the most purely beautiful thing the bodily senses can apprehend. And in this favoured age in which we live, there is superadded upon this exquisite charm of beauty, the intellectual sense of power that reaches to an infinite distance, and tells the composition of the very source from which the light comes, by noting the interferences with the brilliant bands. And with that sense of almost boundless intellectual power, there comes, as there should always come when man really feels a consciousness of that of which at his best he is capable, there comes the soul-subduing sense of humble thankfulness to Almighty God, who has given such rich and noble gifts to man. But striking and suggestive and beautiful as what you see is, you do not see all that is there. The human eye is not so arranged as to see it all. Down below the deepest colours in the scale, up above the most delicate, there are vibrations of like kind to which the eye is not sensitive. Their presence can be demonstrated to the eye by the combinations of science. You can so concentrate the energy at the

bottom of the scale, below the deepest bar of colour, that you set on fire a substance sufficiently sensitive. You can so arrange the material on which the vibrations above the highest and most delicate colours fall, that its parts are stirred, and, above the highest point of the spectrum, illumination, with a special beauty of its own, bursts upon your eyes.

That is a case in which the eye of the body is unable to see that which science shows to be there. Physical science is the handmaid of divinity, the interpreter to us of that of which the Holy Scriptures have no revelation,—the manner of the Creator's working in the physical world. And science does no small service to divinity when it shows in this way how the seen, by imperceptible stages, with no break of continuity, shades off into the unseen, and how the unseen is as real as the seen.

II. But none of us would long be satisfied with the life of the body alone, lived ever so well and worthily. We must, if we would avoid a growing discontent, we must live the inner—the spiritual—life too. The eye of the spirit must be an eye that sees. The life of the spirit must be a real life. Not a life apart from that of the body, but a life spiritualising and etherealising the bodily life. The real—the permanent—element in all material things around us, is that essence of them which the spirit apprehends. The life of real worth and dignity, the life which man is meant to live, the only life which man can be content to live, is the life of him whose spiritual eye is trained and strengthened to see eternal truths in the changing courses of an every-day life, eternal verities in what others call a matter-of-fact existence, eternal realities in the events of an hour. It is not given to all of us to choose our work in life, but to every one it is given to spiritualise it if he will. Your work may be what men who know no better miscall base, mechanical; you have an alchemy which transmutes it—to the eye of the spirit—into that which is noble, ideal. Your work may be of the most exalted kind, what men would call—and rightly call—noble in itself, ideal. If the eye of the spirit is blurred or is blind, the noble work it is yours to do may be in simple truth, to you who do it, no better than base, mechanical.

To teach the eye of the body to see in the higher sense, to observe, to interpret, to enjoy, to minister to the intellectual capacity of man, and be in turn quickened and brightened by man's intellect, we educate the man; working in faith and hope; not discouraged by the many discouragements; sure that it cannot but be right that man should learn to know. How shall we treat the eye of the spirit? how shall we help it to see? how give it insight? I speak not now of what our holy religion may do; for the moment I am not referring to the realms of grace. That

which the spirit of man most needs, for its full play and development, is just that which in this hurrying age is ever more and more difficult to obtain: rest and quiet, time and place for contemplation. This is no idea specially of the Christian revelation, it is common to all ages and all peoples; it is the natural demand of the spirit of man. We have all of us probably seen and noted the highest Oriental ideal of spiritual isolation from things and thoughts of the world,—a seated figure with inscrutable face, the eyes for ever cast down, gazing endlessly into the palm of the hand. This was one of the ideas connected with the prophet of old times. He sat apart in rapt contemplation; the things of the world and of the flesh shut out from his sight; his eyes fixed steadily on some unmoving thing; the spiritual element ever growing in relative importance, and at last overpowering the material, and dominating the whole man. And then there welled up within him, from some spiritual source, some inspiration, the thoughts and the words that were to frame and to form his prophetic utterance; and he poured forth dark sayings, or declared, as one inspired, the will of God.

And if the eye of the spirit is by care and contemplation trained to see spiritual verities, to range as freely and keenly over the realms of the unseen as the eye of the body over the works of nature and of art, what shall it, in its furthest flight, its keenest insight, what shall it see? The answer to that depends on the answer to this,—how has the man limited the range of his spirit by limiting the range of his belief? The eye of the spirit cannot but travel far, whatever and however the man believes. It ranges to the extreme limit of intellectual power, and there it loses itself. But loses itself in what? Either in the depths of baffled wonder, or in the heights of adoring love. That which to the one is everywhere on the intellectual horizon and up to the intellectual zenith an impassable barrier, is to the other the mighty hand of God, working the works of power and of mercy and of grace. For the one man, the man who can feel, who can give his spirit play, but does not believe,—ask one of themselves—one of the worthiest of themselves—what in the end, the inner eye of those who do not believe can see. He tells you—they are his words—'the pitiless brazen heavens overarch them and believers alike; they bear their trials, or their hearts break, in their own strength.' For the other man, the man who believes, ask him what in the end his inner eye can see. He tells you—they are his own words—'I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.'

CANON BROWNE.

TRINITY SUNDAY

Visions of God.

Go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. Then the Spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place. EZEKIEL iii. 11, 12.

I. A VISION of the Lord. A mission from the Lord. These were the memories that sustained the prophet in the midst of all the weary and disheartening discouragements of his long mission amongst this rebellious people against the weariness of the captivity that he shared; against the heart-sickening of the hope of return and deliverance long delayed; against the pain of estrangement from his own people; against the humiliation of the rejection of his words as they despised him and them. One thing, and one only, must have cheered and sustained this man alone in the midst of his brethren, that he had seen God, and that God had sent him. And these words supply all the text that we need for our discourse as we ask you to help to send men out for God. The natural thought that rises to our heart at such a moment is, Whom shall we send, and how shall they be sent, and what shall be their message amongst men, and what shall be their preparation amongst men? And I ask you, in the first place, to observe the nature of the prophet's preparation for his work. It was a secret and a hidden vision of God. It was a preparation unknown to other men. It was not an outward and a visible call; it was not a visible stamp of authority, or office given to him that men might see and recognise—he had that as priest before he was called to be a prophet; but it was that hidden and secret vision of God, it was that unseen speech of his soul with the Spirit of his God and of the Spirit of God with his soul that he could never demonstrate or prove to other men. That for them might be a dream of dreams, a visionary record of what never happened; but for him from that hour it was the most real of all realities—a living voice through all his life, that shaped and coloured it long after, and that drove him forth amongst his fellow-men, now to speak to them, as he tells us, in the bitterness of his spirit, and now under the burden of the Lord to sit down, astonished and silent with them in their sorrow; but that made him a new, a different man for the rest of his life—from the moment that he saw and heard those visions of God and the voice of God within them. You see, then, that there was for Ezekiel, not only outward and visible preparation of the outward call as priest and member of an established hierarchy, but that there was for him

also something that no man could give him, even immediately, from God; that there was in him that which no man knew but himself, and was only known to him and God—a secret baptism of God's Holy Spirit; a special vocation and call to do a special work for God amongst men, a sending forth to his brethren with the Word of the Lord which he was to learn in his very heart of hearts, and of which the speaking should be the mission and business of his life for ever after. This was the secret preparation of the prophet's work, and this is just that secret and hidden preparation for God's work amongst men which our Church distinctly recognises the necessity of in all those who seek her ministry, while she as distinctly recognises the need for the outward and visible call.

There are visions of God that all men may have, and may have in common together. There are visions, for instance, which we may speak of as the reflective visions of God—visions of God in the glories of nature; visions of God in the marvels of history and of Providence; visions of God in the worship and sacraments of the sanctuary; but there is one vision more, one hour of vision which should come to each man, if it were but once in his life, and woe to him who claims to be a prophet for God who has not seen that vision and passed through that hour when, the man lifting himself or lifted up above the low, and mean, and poor surroundings of the daily world in which he lives, with its strife, with its sorrows, with its cares, with its business, with its seductions, and rising high above these to the very heavens where the Lord dwells, sees God for himself, hears God's voice speaking to him as His, and claiming him for His, and gives himself in answering offer, and gives himself to God and says, 'O Lord, here am I; send me to do Thy work amongst men: make of me Thine instrument and Thy servant, and give me the great glory of serving Thee, and telling Thy words in the ears of Thy people.' The man who has not that preparation cannot be a successful prophet of God. The man who has it, whether men hear or forbear, will be a faithful, will, in the true and real sense of the word always be a successful, prophet of God. I say the man who thus preaches because he thus believes, will always be a successful prophet, and the Church that thus teaches because she thus believes will always be a successful Church.

II. The mission of the National Church is not first and before all things to be popular. It is first and before all things to be faithful, to speak the living Word of the living God, as she learned it in her visions of God. Men seem to forget this great truth nowadays, and men seem with a faithless and an anxious timidity only eager to make the Church popular, and to make her popular with the masses, and many are the counsellors and various the advice that the Church is

enjoying at this moment as to how she shall make herself popular and successful. 'Make yourselves popular with the masses,' is the advice of one set of counsellors; 'make yourselves popular thus—by orgetting one-half of those words which you believe to be the words of the Lord, and mutilate and emasculate the other half. Get rid of all the dogma that you can possibly banish from your creed, retaining, if it need be, only the first word of it, that you believe in God. Lower as far as you can all idea and thought of the supernatural, and make a popular, and a scientific, and a scantily dogmatic and slightly religious Gospel, and then you will win the masses. Debase the pure gold of the sanctuary with the alloy of modern philosophy, and then you will make the National Church popular.' Yes; popular by debasing and degrading and denying her great mission. Popular by speaking in men's ears, not 'whether they will hear or whether they will forbear,' but only what they will hear, and never daring to venture upon that which makes them forbear. This is not the mission, and this is not the work of the prophet of God.

III. A mighty rushing sound from the past filled the ear of the prophet as he went out to his prophet's work; and so go forth, or may go forth, the prophets and the messengers of the Church of England in this great city, and this kingdom of England. No new church, no sect of yesterday sends out these prophets and messengers to the English people. The name and the attraction of the old Church of England are not yet dead amongst men; and as the prophets go forth there go with them the voices of the past, memories of the old Church from which men have been estranged, and yet to which they are not hostile; and in the ears of the prophets themselves is ringing, it may be, the glorious story of the Church of England, in the purity of her reformation, in the fervency of her early zeal, or back, and further back, along the story of the Church of Christ from which she derives her being—back through all the scenes of the Church's warfare, and trial, and triumph, through crises more perilous, through dangers more deadly, than those through which she is now passing—down through all the ages comes the rushing voice of the past, the voice of prophet, and confessor, and martyr, and evangelist—the voice of Him who said upon the Cross, 'It is finished,' as He contemplated the work He was doing then for all time and for all men. With these voices from the past in their ears, lifting them up above the turmoil, and the strife, and the meanness, and the pettiness, and the weariness, and the terror of the present, strengthening them against the low mutterings of the storm that may be threatening to break in the future, filling their hearts with visions of God, and with the desire and will to sacrifice themselves for the God whom they shall see in faith,

may prophets, and messengers, and ministers, and laymen, alike together go forth increasingly for the old Church of England in this great centre of the nations of the world's life!

ARCHBISHOP MAGEE.

The Captain of the Lord's Host.

And Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.
JOSHUA v. 13, 14.

THERE has been some difference of opinion in the Church as to who it was that appeared to Joshua at the time we read of, but one thing at least may be said for certain, that this is one of a class of appearances which we find all through the earlier books of the Old Testament, from the time of Abraham (at least) to that of the Judges before Samuel, where men see one who is called sometimes a man, sometimes an angel, but who is in some manner the invisible God Himself. We read of the appearance of three angels to Abraham, how 'two went on towards Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the Lord.' Again, an angel wrestled with Jacob, and Jacob said, 'I have seen God face to face.' An angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush, but He who dwelt in the bush said, 'I am the Lord God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' and even proclaimed as His the incommunicable name of God, 'I Am that I Am.' And when the Israelites were journeying through the wilderness, it is sometimes said that God went before them in a pillar of fire and of cloud, sometimes that an angel did. In one place particularly we seem to find an explanation of this double presence, where God says to Moses, 'Behold, I send an angel before thee . . . for My name is in him.' So afterwards we find an angel appearing to Gideon, and to the mother of Samson; and each time apparently He accepts a sacrifice made to God as His own, and certainly is spoken of as God by those who see Him.

Now it is possible that in all these revelations of God there was one of His holy angels really present—probably, if so, the Archangel Michael, who seems both from the Old and New Testament to be the chief of all God's host; or possibly there was only a form, of an angel or a man, taken by the Divine Person for a time, as when at the Lord Jesus' Baptism the Holy Ghost appeared in a bodily shape like a dove. But however it was that God made His presence visible, it is certain that God was present; and it seems the best

opinion, as it is the oldest amongst Christians, that He who was present was God the Son, to whom, as He was afterwards to become Man, it was most fitting to reveal Himself among men in human form. And whether it be true or no that He manifested Himself by means of a created angel, it seems to be fit that He Himself should be called sometimes the Lord, and sometimes the angel of the Lord; because while He is of one substance with the Father, very God of very God, He is obedient to the Father, and is sent by Him with His messages of grace to the world; the first meaning of the word Angel being simply messenger, though it is commonly used of one special class of God's messengers—the holy spirits created by God and living with God in heaven.

We may take it then as certain, that He whom Joshua now saw, who called Himself the captain of the Lord's host, was God Himself; we may take it as almost certain that He was the Son of God, whom we know by His human name of Jesus Christ. What I desire to notice now is, not only the fact of His thus revealing Himself on earth, before the time when He came in the flesh, but the authority He assumed over Joshua and all the army of Israel. Joshua's question, 'Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?' was a perfectly natural one for him to ask, at the sight of an armed man in an enemy's country; we can scarcely say that he did wrong to ask it; but it seems as though the Lord met the question with something like a rebuke. He said, 'Nay.' It seemed to Joshua that there were two sides, his own and the enemy's, between which the battle was to be fought out; he had to learn that it was not for him nor for Israel to gain the victory, but for the Lord their God. To teach him and all Israel this more plainly, the Lord gave him special commands as to the way the first victory was to be gained, in the taking of Jericho; this was to be done, entirely and plainly, by God and not by man; and for all the war that followed, though more was to depend upon human prudence and courage, they were still to know that they were fighting, not for themselves, but for their Lord; that they were not at liberty to act as they pleased, or as they thought best, but were to act in entire obedience to Him.

I. Is not this a lesson which we require to learn in the war we have to fight against the power of sin within and about us? People who mean, like Joshua, to be soldiers of the Lord are apt to be self-willed in the way they chose to fight His battles; it is they and their adversaries whom they expect to try conclusions, and they judge everything and everybody according as it is on the one side or the other. They are not willing to acknowledge that there are powers greater than the questions about which they are zealous, and perhaps rightly zealous. They are ready to challenge God Himself, and ask

Him if He is for or against the cause in which they are embarked; it is a surprise to them if He answers 'Nay,' if He tells them He is of neither side, that He belongs neither to them nor to their adversaries, but that both their adversaries and they belong to Him; and that even if it is His will that they should prevail, it is only possible for them to do so by absolute submission to Him.

II. Patience and submission to God's will are in fact the foundation of all excellence in the Christian character; just as discipline, and ready and unquestioning obedience to orders are the most important of all qualities in an army of this world. It is when things are against you that your mind is tried and trained; you have to make the best of them, but you are not tempted to 'seek great things for yourself'; if you escape disaster you will be satisfied, and that is hard enough. Now it cannot be useless for us to remember in our spiritual war, if we find things are against us, and that the operations in which we are engaged are unsuccessful, that it was under these conditions that the Captain of the Lord's host Himself fought out His great battle on earth. Everything was against Him; He had to do everything alone; He could rely on no one to support Him, for even His three best officers broke down under the strain. Judging it in a natural way, His life was a failure—His ministry was a failure: He had fought to conquer the world for God, and He had lost the battle. But His faith and obedience did not fail, rather it was perfected by His defeat, as it is written, 'Though he were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.' He still went on fearlessly until He had finished the work which God gave Him to do: then He said, 'It is finished!' and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. And then He had conquered.

W. H. SIMCOX.

The Deity of Jesus

I and My Father are one. S. JOHN x. 30.

WHAT can be said to explain or invalidate the abundant testimony we have that Christ commanded men to pray in His name; that He received adoration when on earth alike from those who sought, as from those who received His blessing; that He was worshipped after His departure with a far more intense devotion than before it?

I. Three theories are offered to our intelligence; one is of a special, and two are of a general nature. The special case is, that S. Stephen's prayer to Christ was forced from him in a moment of

anguish. It was a semi-unconscious ejaculation, and highly unfitted to be made the premiss of a 'theological inference.' Passing by, with the merest mention, the manifest *petitio principii* which designates belief in the Deity of Him to whom the proto-martyr prayed as a 'theological inference,' it may be remarked, that if S. Stephen had lived an ungodly life, and had prayed for mercy for his own soul, one might be disposed to think it possible that the cry was forced from him. Agony forces prayer from many a man. But S. Stephen lived no such life; he was 'full of the Holy Ghost'; he prayed to Christ in the hour of death because it was the habit of his life.

The second explanation offered is that of the gifted Channing. The worship of the Saviour was an enthusiastic reverence peculiar to Eastern custom. Indeed, Channing is sure 'that the worship paid to Christ during His public ministry was rendered to Him only as a divine messenger.' But was He the only divine messenger? What of Moses, Joshua, the Judges, the Prophets, John the Baptist, the Twelve Apostles, including S. Paul, 'the Apostle of the Gentiles'? These were divine messengers in the sense in which Channing speaks of Christ; and if so, 'the enthusiastic reverence peculiar to Eastern countries' should assert itself with regard to them as well as to Him. They came in the name of the same God; preached, some of them in the same localities; faced the same prejudices; lived among the same religious ideas, social customs, and even wrought miracles. Yet we do not read that Oriental enthusiasm bent the knee to them.

The third theory is espoused and advocated by a name destined to attain an unhappy notoriety in the life, literature, and religion of England; I mean Mr. Newman. This scheme—to Christians blasphemous, audacious, and shocking—has an awful merit. It is, what the Humanitarian scheme is not, consistently logical; for he accepts the only creed we can offer to those who deny the Deity of Jesus. He denies that Christ was God. He denies that Christ was good. Professor Tyndall speaks of 'the incomparable life of Christ upon the earth'; but not so Mr. Newman. According to him, when Jesus was 'worshipped' in the language of supplication or thanksgiving, the people were pandering to His vanity. 'When I find,' say this writer, 'His high satisfaction at all personal recognition, and bowing before His individuality, I almost doubt whether, if one wished to draw the character of a vain and vacillating pretender, it would be possible to draw anything more to the purpose than this.' And again: 'I can no longer give the same human reverence as before to one who has been seduced into vanity so egregious.' 'So far from being the picture of perfection, it sometimes seems to me the picture of a conscious and wilful impostor. His general character is too high for this; and I therefore make deductions from the

account.' 'I feel assured . . . that such presumption (as claiming to be the Son of Man) must have entangled Him into evasions and insincerities which naturally end in crookedness of conscience and real imposture.' Shocking, profane, blasphemous as these statements are, there is no escape from the sin of making them, once belief in the Deity of Jesus is surrendered. Newmanism is the logical tendency and terminus of Humanitarianism. If men deny that Christ was God, they cannot be allowed to say that Christ was good.

II. The doctrine here enforced has an experimental value for those who 'by the Holy Ghost' cling to Jesus as their Lord. Times there are when the Deity of our Redeemer is especially assuring, sustaining, comforting. These occasions may be compared with their typical anticipations recorded in the gospels, recurring in the history of the Church, and of the isolated believer. I have, however, but slender hope that the reality of this revelation of the God-Man will be appreciated, either so long as sin has dominion, or as self is suffered to stand between the sinner and the Saviour. Oh, then, I beseech you, 'by the mercies of God'; by the love 'that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all'; 'by the Agony and Bloody Sweat; by the Cross and Passion; by the precious Death and Burial; by the glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost,' 'be ye reconciled to God.' He waits to be gracious; and as He stands at the door and knocks, Christ may again marvel at the unbelief of those for whom He died: for, alas! alas! the surrender of a universe for our enjoyment is to ingrate sinners a loftier boon than the surrender of its Creator as their Atonement! And, O eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Saviour! Thou who wept that man might smile, and who bled that man might never die! Thou, O Christ, art all we want. We are redeemed by Thy blood, saved by Thy life, succoured by Thy full-flowing sympathy, enriched by Thy fulness. Thou wouldst have us abjure Thee as Man, if we may not adore Thee as God. Thou wouldst instruct us to avoid Thine example, if we may not approach Thee as our Emmanuel.

But, by the spirit of prophecy, by the everlasting gospel, by the testimony of those of whom the world was not worthy, by the universal shuddering at Thine Agony, by the Church established by Thy Resurrection, we believe and are persuaded that 'Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ; Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.'

DEAN LEFROY.

TRINITY SUNDAY

The Son of God.

The Jews sought to kill Him because . . He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. S. JOHN v. 18.

FIRST, Why do we render divine homage to the Nazarene?
Second, What practical consequences flow from the fact?

I. 1. We assume that He was morally upright and intelligent and that the record in the gospels is broadly correct.

Then it appears:

a. He claimed freedom from all weakness and sin.

Never prays for Himself; never asks forgiveness.

This cannot be the result of moral dulness, for notice His wonderful power of insight!

Not the result of conceit, for notice His transparent humility!

b. He assumes to be superior to accepted religious rule.

e.g. In His bearing towards the 'Sabbath.'

His bearing toward the Law: 'Moses said—but I say,' etc.

c. He claims Divinity.

'He that hath seen Me,' etc. 'If any man love Me We will come,' etc. 'I and My Father are one.' 'For this the Jews sought to kill Him.'

d. He offers to do things which only God can do.

'I am the Way—Truth—Life.'

The source of spiritual life: 'Bread,' 'Vine,' 'Shepherd,' 'Spring, etc.

Claims to control approach to God: 'No man cometh to the Father,' etc. 'No man hath seen the Father,' etc.

Promises to raise the dead—to judge—to rule.

Places His service before all other obligation; filial, marital, social, political.

2. The mighty works; not miracles alone, but the present fact of the kingdom.

It is the practically unanimous consent of the most enlightened portion of humanity that His claims are valid.

It is easier to accept the truth than to account for the miracle which its acceptance would be if it were false.

II. Do practical results in the line of conduct depend in any way upon the outcome of the discussion about the nature of Jesus? Clearly, yes.

The meaning of life depends upon it: for example:

1. The most salient fact in life is pain.

Now He declares the disposition of God, that 'He is Love'; that 'He doth not willingly,' etc.

This testimony concerning God's disposition is only valuable as coming from one who is in a position to know; from any man it is not conclusive.

2. His revelation of human sin saves it from becoming contemptible, and keeps it always tragical.

3. Stems the tendency to regard man as so completely separated by nature from God that wrong is natural and inevitable.

e.g. The Cynic, the Pharisee, the Fatalist.

[If we believe that the ship in which we are launched is doomed, we will either belt our gold about us or broach the spirit casks according as our disposition may be. But if we remember that the Captain of our salvation is He in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead, that the ship's company are the sons of God, we will minister to the thirsty, keep ourselves sober, and wait serenely to come to the haven where we would be.—Phillips Brooks, *Influence of Jesus*, p. 14.]

S. D. M'CONNELL.

The Service of Dogma.

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. GALATIANS i. 6-8.

I. IT is good for us to remember on Trinity Sunday that the right of interpretation is embodied for us in what we call dogma. Many of us do not see the need of dogma, just because we are too apt to miss the true secret of Christian authority. We suffer this to become disguised, and the deception is easy enough; for the Christian faith is not afraid to enter into the thick of human life. It spreads itself about as an influence, a tone, and a moral force; it creeps down within the body of the social life. So it works in secret as the leaven in the lump, but if you are tempted to treat it as one among many influences, perhaps the best and sweetest of all, but still only a moral force working in concert with other forces, then you will find yourself pulled up short by something in it which claims an absolute title, an original and unique authority. This holds ever aloof, supreme and solitary. What is this undying kernel which repels delusion? We know well it is the personality of Jesus Christ. His authoritative personality, His permanent claims, this it is which accounts for the permeating influence exercised over the world by Christianity.

It is itself a living will, for it has life in itself, accountable only to itself in God, answerable only to itself, rejecting all interpretation from without, incomparable with any other, enthroned in dominion far above all principalities aud powers, and every name that is named. That is the heart and core of Christianity, by which alone it persists, endures, and conquers, and the language by which it asserts—this is dogma. Dogma simply puts into words this indissoluble and unique element, which makes it impossible to account for Christianity as an appendage or element of something else. Dogma declares that the person of the Lord and Master of Christianity holds in it all that is wanted to explain its rise, growth, power, demands, promises. Christianity is Christ, and Christ is Christianity; Christ, to the Jews, a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness, but to all who believe, Christ, the sole foundation, the Author and Finisher of the faith, the one Head, the one rock, the wisdom and power of God. That wisdom, that power, may make themselves felt in influences; but if it were only that influence which it creates, it would never have a dogmatic creed. It had a creed because, if you examine that influence, your analysis of it must lead you at last face to face with this direct and downright challenge, 'Whom say ye that I, the Son of Man, am?' and because that challenge once made can only be met in the language of the creeds.

II. The danger, then, against which S. Paul fought, in its simpler form sweeps in upon us through the great width and variety of our travelling. Our tours now take us so easily far outside the frontiers of Christianity that we rub shoulders with a dozen religions; and, by the sheer force of an unguarded instinct, Christianity slips somehow into a subordinate place in our imagination. We look upon it as one religion among many, and we talk as if it had grown as the others grow. It has many affinities with them as it has contrasts. Its rites and forms are curiously like to theirs; its sacraments are in many instances somewhat similar. We may still regard it as better than the other religions; we may not be the least disposed to surrender its claim as being the highest; but anyhow, it takes its place in the line of natural development. So its picture tells upon us, until all sense of the peculiar significance, of the supreme validity in Christ, dies out of us, and of course when that has happened, dogma must appear simply ridiculous. For dogma is an assertion that in Christ lies something which is incomparable. When that condition of mind which I have described comes over the traveller who has already surrendered unconsciously the very core of the faith—the unique and solitary pre-eminence of Christ—it is because it has made this unconscious surrender that it comes up against the assertiveness of dogma with a shock of repugnance. Or here at home, without

travel at all, we are terribly liable to the habit of letting Christianity sink down to the level of a social influence. Christianity does so much good, and does it so much better than philanthropy, that we see and feel what a loss to the general well-being it would be if this were withdrawn, we feel that we ourselves are the better for the influence it has had over us. All this is so true, only we are observing it as a phenomenon which impresses us favourably, and never once perhaps have we gone behind the phenomenon, and asked, 'Whence does this excellent influence spring? What does it assert? Does it simply spring out of the belief that in Christ Jesus there is to be found an authoritative supremacy which nothing short of absolute allegiance of heart to the heart and will of God can ever satisfy? Is that the motive, the cause of these effects? If so, what am I about? Can I accept and face the influence, and not accept the challenge of the creed: 'Whom sayest thou that I, the Son of Man, am?' There is the challenge. The creed is proclaimed aloud; we have heard it; what are we going to do? This will stand over against us with an importunate inquiry. Oh that with S. Peter our hearts may burn within us until passionate words break from our lips, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' God grant us that to-day, by the help of the Holy Ghost, we may deliver out our faith with a new emphasis, a new force of conviction. 'Yes, it is true; I see it; this religion is no outgrowth of human relations; no! there is but one who can explain it; I see Thee and know Thee who Thou art; Thou art the Christ, the holy One of God!'

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

The Holy Trinity.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them. NUMBERS vi. 22-27.

FROM time to time, not often enough to imperil the belief in one God, which must needs come first, yet sufficiently often to attract the Christian's devout attention, we find in the Old Testament strange glimpses, not only of a plurality of Divine Persons, who say, 'Let us make man in our own image,' 'The man is become like one of us,' 'Let us go down and there confound their language,' but strange glimpses, I say, of a threefold personality in one. Fanciful

though it may almost seem, the Church still in her lessons for to-day makes us observe how when Abraham received a visit from three mysterious strangers, not, assuredly, to be thought of as theophanies of the Father and the Holy Ghost as well as of the Son, an instinct caused the patriarch, though in other respects he treated all three alike, to fall in adoration before one only, and say, 'My Lord, if I have found favour in Thy sight.' And conversely, when the young prophet, undone with penitential fear, found himself gazing upon a single figure on the temple-throne, and recognised it to be the Lord of Hosts, he heard those hosts ascribing to Him again and again a three-fold holiness: 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts.'

But nowhere is the secret of the Holy Trinity so near to breaking out of the silence in which it lay 'hid from ages and from generations,' as in that solemn form of benediction which, by special injunction, was to be continually used by the Levitical priesthood. The words which close the injunction appear to call attention to this fact, 'they shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.' The act of benediction was to be not only a pious and kindly wish or expression on the part of the priest, it was to be in some sense sacramental. It was accompanied by a real corresponding movement of the divine beneficence, 'I will bless them,' because by it the people were brought under the special protection of the God who was revealing Himself to them: 'They shall put My name upon the Children of Israel.' And for this purpose it was not enough to utter once the sacred name in which the covenant had been made. 'Jehovah,' once uttered and no more, was not the name of God in that full sense in which He desired to gather His people under its hallowing power. It must be thrice repeated.

I. 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee.' This is pre-eminently the blessing of the Father. It is the most general in form, and in fact includes all that is made more articulate in the clauses which follow. No good gift from God to men escapes from the large boundaries of that full prayer, 'The Lord bless thee.' But when it is set over-against the later members of the formula we feel that it belongs especially to the field of natural religion, to that widest domain which in a peculiar sense belongs to the Divine Fatherhood. Of course I would not for a moment suggest that the operation of the Son and the Spirit are unknown in the realm of nature and of universal providence. It was through the Word and Son of God that all things were made, and in Him all things consist; it is He who bears all things along by the utterance of His power. It was the Spirit of God who in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters, to produce order and life and beauty. There is no dealing of the Father with creation which is not performed through

the agency of the Son and Spirit. Still less true, if possible, would it be to suggest that the Father has no part in the blessings which are directly attributed to the Son and Spirit. Those glorious Persons owe to Him Their whole being, and every thought and purpose which They have. 'The Son can do nothing of Himself'; so He joyfully confesses, 'but what things soever the Father doeth, these the Son doeth likewise.' And again, the Spirit 'shall not speak from Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak.' Whatever is done in the realms of grace and enlightenment is the doing of the Father through the Son and Spirit; and whatever is done in the realm of nature is the doing of the Son and Spirit along with the Father. Yet the realm of natural providence is less conspicuously Their place of action than His. There is an aspect in which His working is more widely felt than Theirs. Gradually the well-known words of the Catechism, contract, or I would rather say concentrate, the energies of the Three Divine Persons, from 'all the world' to 'all mankind,' from 'all mankind' to 'all the elect people of God,' while they do not cut short our hope that one day, when the mediatorial work is over, the elect shall expand into a world, and God (that is, the Father) shall be 'all in all.'

It is, then, the Father's name which is put upon men when the priest of God says, by His appointment, 'The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.' It is a blessing which descends upon many who, unhappily for themselves and for us all, do not profit, or profit less by the more special blessings which come after. Unbelief and sin may hinder men from receiving what the Father designs for them in the peculiar dispensations of His Son and Spirit; but His overflowing bounty at least reaches out to them in the things of which they are more susceptible. 'Your Father which is in heaven maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' At some periods, when men knew less than we do now of the respective values of natural bounties and those which are (in one sense) above nature, God's indiscriminate distribution of His natural bounties has even amounted to a scandal; and a Job or an Asaph has been dismayed and indignant at seeing the wicked in prosperity and the righteous afflicted. But be it so. Let the elementary benediction of the Father come upon all men, most of all, we might almost say, upon those who shut out from themselves higher blessings. 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee.' The language sets forth the positive and negative sides of God's ever watchful beneficence. It invokes all that kind of good gifts which the book of Deuteronomy details: 'Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field; blessed shall be the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle; blessed shall be

thy basket and thy store; blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.' It deprecates all the opposite evils: 'The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand; the sun shall not smite thee by day, neither the moon by night; the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul.'

II. The second member of the benediction carries us further. It is especially the blessing of the Son,—or rather let us say of the Father through the Son. 'The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.'

I am aware that the expression is capable of a very general interpretation. The making of the face to shine upon a person might be a mere poetical, Oriental, hyperbolical way of comparing some great potentate to the sun; when his face is overspread with the clouds of displeasure, his suppliants are in gloom and distress; when his face brightens towards them, they are made happy. His favour is to them the light and the day. But we may be permitted to see more in the expression than this. I do not find that it is ever used of earthly potentates, or of any other than God, except in one passage where the context gives it quite a different turn. In the book of Ecclesiastes it is said that 'a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine.' There, obviously, the meaning is something quite different from that of favourable regard. In all the other passages where the expression is found, it is used of God alone; and it may not unreasonably be supposed that in every case the use of it is to be historically traced to the well-known formula in which the children of Israel were by divine appointment to be blessed. If we believe at all in a divine inspiration which somehow smote these words into the mind of the legislator, we may well suppose that they were designed to be richly suggestive of the true relation between God and man. What then do they suggest? They certainly suggest the thought of favour: but they suggest more. They suggest the thought of revelation, of dealing personally with men, of direct and unveiled intercourse. It is impossible to hear these words, 'The Lord make His face shine upon thee,' without thinking of those in which S. Paul enunciates the special blessings brought to us in Christ, when he says that 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' The Aaronic blessing is a prophecy of the Incarnation, of the covenant of grace which came with it.

We all need the benediction of the Son, and of the Father through Him. We need not only the fatherly kindness which blesses and keeps us. We need the still more fatherly kindness which shines out upon us in personal fellowship and forbearing graciousness. None of

us deserves the bounties which God pours out upon us, and none of us ought to presume upon them. But when conscience accuses us, and we look in vain to natural powers and influences to undo the evil we have done to ourselves and to others, then we may lift up our eyes and see how grace shone in the face of the Lord Jesus as He said, 'Go in peace and sin no more'; as He hung upon the Cross and cried, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'; as He proclaimed to His Church in all the radiance of His victory, 'Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted'; and our burden will fall from our necks, and we shall feel that He is not deceiving us when He promises us renewal and sanctification.

III. But there remains a third movement of benediction, which is perhaps not so easy to discern or to describe. The Lord is not only invoked to bless and keep as the Father, and to reveal Himself as a gracious God in the face of His Son. 'The Lord lift up His face upon thee, and give thee peace.' It is the blessing of the Holy Ghost.

This expression, like the former, may be said to be unique. In the Book of Job, indeed, we find once or twice used of men such a phrase as 'Then shalt thou lift up thy face without a spot,' where unabashed confidence is meant. Clearly this is not meant in the Levitical blessing, nor in that passage in the Fourth Psalm which is based upon it, and which combines (as ecclesiastical usage has done) the second and the third benedictions. 'Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy face upon us.' At first it seems to add nothing further to the idea of making the face to shine upon the people, but only to repeat it in another form. It might, perhaps, be true to reply that it is often difficult to distinguish between the present action ascribed in the New Testament to the Son and the action ascribed to the Spirit Paraclete. I may, perhaps, however, be allowed to hazard a distinction. The making of the face to shine upon Israel expresses more distinctly the character of the revelation made as a revelation of favour and grace. The lifting up of the face indicates rather the giving of prominence, the conspicuous display of that which is so revealed. The face of God in Christ is to be set on high before men's eyes with steadfast insistence, as an object not to be obscured. And this is the blessed work of the Holy Ghost. Not every object, however clear in itself, speaks at once to the eye which sees it. Our senses require to be educated and instructed before we are able to discriminate justly what is presented to them. A man must be himself something of an artist or a musician, in theory if not in practice, before he can really appreciate a landscape of Turner or a symphony of Beethoven. And if this is true of the things of sense, how much more is it true of moral and spiritual things! Here we are

all like little children. The outlines and the colours of a picture strike upon the little child's eye in precisely the same way as upon your own; yet the child does not take them in until you interpret them. You take him upon your knee and point to the picture, and you say, 'That is our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross, dying to save us; see, those are nails that are driven through His hands, and through His feet; you see how He is hanging by them with all His weight, and that is the crown of thorns upon His head; how they prick His blessed forehead! you can see the drops of blood trickling down.' Without your calling attention to the picture in detail, the child might have turned it over, unimpressed; but when the picture is thus simply shown the little children will often, like that infant daughter of Charles I., be ready to cry out, 'O poor, poor man!' and earnestly try to overcome their childish faults in consequence.

So does the Holy Spirit deal with us. He takes of that which is Christ's, and shows it unto us. He presses now one point, now another, upon our attention. He lifts up—or He will lift up, if we permit Him—that glorious and gracious countenance before our eyes, until it has its due effect upon us—now making us ashamed of our baseness, now animating us with noble aspirations, now drawing out our hearts in grateful devotion; and as the sum and outcome of all His witness to Christ giving us that peace of which the Blessing speaks—that 'peace of God' which none can understand save they who have had the Holy Spirit for their teacher, and have learned from Him to believe in the Father and the Son. 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His face upon thee, and give thee peace.' Thus in Him who lifts up the face of God upon us, and gives us peace, is completed the benediction of the Most Holy Trinity.

CANON MASON.

The Witness of Foreign Missions.

That they may know the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. COLOSSIANS ii. 2, 3.

I. MISSIONARY enterprise has now passed beyond the stage of experiment. We have experience of every variety and manner and condition of evangelisation. During this century the whole field of missions, the world, has been laid open. The sacred books of all the great religions have been made accessible in trustworthy form. We can feel as never before what is needed. We can

see by what thoughts Gentile faiths have prevailed. We can hear and distinguish the manifold cries of various races which they contain. We can trace out with reverent devotion in all the records of human activity, the progressive action of the Word, the Son of God, the Maker, and the heir of the world. We can discern the broad outline of that of which we may speak, without presumption, as the divine plan in the education of the world, using the privilege which the Lord bestowed upon us when He called His disciples no longer servants but friends, friends capable of entering into the Father's counsel. This conception of a divine plan in the movement of human life brings home to us a fact of momentous import: in this plan we have a definite place. Our office is not of our own devising; we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them. We are included in the divine idea of the world created in Christ Jesus. Our works ready prepared afore by God; there can be no failure if we claim them. No labour will be lost if we offer ourselves in perfect humility for the fulfilment of the will of God. Our works are ready, and what these works are can be seen from our position and endowments; for if, as Englishmen, as English Churchmen, we consider our national character, our history, our necessary influence, our possessions, we cannot but acknowledge that we are called as no other people have been called to missionary labour. More than one hundred and fifty years ago, my great predecessor, Bishop Butler, the soberest of noble thinkers, pleaded in this city that navigation and commerce should be consecrated to the service of religion by being made the means of propagating it in every country with which we have any intercourse. He spoke when the foundations of our colonial empire were barely laid, when our foreign trade had not reached more than about a thirtieth of its present volume. And how can we measure now the weight of the obligation which his words lay upon us, the extent of the works which God has prepared for us to-day? Since Butler wrote, India has been added to our sovereignty, the most splendid, the most arduous trust ever committed to a nation, committed to us as stewards of God, that by patience and tenderness and sympathy we may interpret and complete the thoughts of many races; and, taught by the Spirit, sent in the name of Christ, may confirm and satisfy the aspirations of many faiths.

II. Foreign Missions are a witness to the will of God for the world, and it is through the Church, the congregation of faithful men, that the will of God is to be fulfilled. We may be well overpowered with awe that the salvation of men should be made dependent on the labours of those that believe. Yet man made in the image of God is taken by Him as His fellow-worker in accomplishing the end of

creation. Even as the Word became Flesh, He now carries forward His purpose of infinite love through those whom before the Incarnation He was not ashamed to call His brethren. The divine plea acts through human members. The vine is fruitful through the branches. Fear, doubt, pride can have no place in us when we reflect on our condition. Our very life is the acceptance of the Father's will, and the doing His work. Self is lost in a divine co-operation. And this fellowship with the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—determines our message. We proclaim Him in whom we are; Him whose perfect obedience has made our obedience possible. We proclaim not merely a system of theology, not an abstract idea, but a person whom we ourselves know, a person loving and to be loved, speaking and to be spoken to, the Saviour, Priest, and King, present with us all the days. And our message is a test of what the gospel is to us. We cannot in the case of races in whom the historic sense is undeveloped at once appeal to the events of the Passion and Resurrection as past facts of unique and infinite significance; but we can point them to the present effects of the love and power which those events reveal, and still communicate. We can make clear what they are to us; we can make clear how, by God's grace, they fill us with tenderness and courage. We can make clear that we believe and act as believing; that Christ not only died and ascended for the most desolate, but that He lives for them now, that He bears them in His heart, on His Father's throne, that He is as near to them as He is to us, the living, loving, reigning Christ, Son of Man and Son of God, uniting in Himself earth and heaven, time and eternity. This is the Gospel which we are charged to publish, the mystery of God, even of Christ.

Foreign missions are a witness to the will of God for the world. Foreign missions proclaim the sovereignty of a living Saviour. Foreign missions also vindicate for the Church of Christ the energy of His life. Christ Himself is their message, and Christ Himself is their strength. His universal authority is the spring of His disciples' power. The present and constant action of the Holy Spirit is alone sufficient to sustain the missionary and give effect sooner or later to his labours. This is made clear to us by the representative record in the Acts, which lays open the working of the Spirit at the foundation of the Church. In that way we read how the Spirit sent in Christ's name prepared and endowed the Apostles and believers for their mission; how He inspired them with courage and wisdom; how He opened glimpses of the future for their guidance; how He directed their judgment at crises in the history of the Church; how He separated and sent forth workers and determined the fields of their work. And all this is written for our learning. The Spirit is with

us no less truly and continually and effectively now than it was with the first generation of Christians. The fruitfulness of our work depends on the directness with which we realise our divine fellowship. We ourselves must feel that our message is indeed His message and help others to feel it. The life of Christ, the Head, is, I repeat it, the life of the body, the Church. If the life of Christ is the life of our Church, His life must be the type of ours; if His strength is our strength, we must be strong as He was. We must accept His pattern of sacrifice as the rule of our noblest service; we must seek to make His mind our mind. He would not call down fire from heaven to consume His enemies, or legions of angels to guard His person, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. This truth has an application on the mission-field which is commonly overlooked. There our conditions become a danger, for in spite of the consciousness of social and intellectual superiority with which we are filled, in spite of the national forces which constitute us conquerors wherever we go as evangelists, in spite of distrust and suspicion with which those who receive our gospel are inclined to regard ourselves, we must loyally and lovingly remember that we come among them, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and indeed, if necessary, to give our lives for those whom we serve. Sympathy was the mind of Christ, and sympathy is the soul of missions. The great word, 'except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone,' holds good of nations and churches and men. It is still true that the way to the kingdom of God is through many afflictions. It is still true that believers must fill up that which is lacking of the affliction of Christ. Yet are we not tempted to believe even as our faith is most sure that the truth which we declare must at once be welcomed by those who share the nature of the men who killed the Prince of Life? Do we not practically forget that a servant is not greater than his lord? If we keep not Christ's word, how will they keep ours?

These thoughts—which foreign missions present with commanding force—the thought of the will of God for mankind to be fulfilled by our service; the thought of a glorified Saviour waiting to satisfy every human nature and to hallow every human endowment; the thought of God Himself as the worker of all we do in His name—touch us all most deeply. All true work for Christ, wherever it is offered, is one work—one in the answer of unquestioning obedience to His voice, one by the unuttered intercession for the fulfilment of His will which is its spirit, one by the quickening force with which it calls into action every capacity for service with which it comes into contact.

BISHOP WESTCOTT.

TRINITY SUNDAY

Our Duty to Africa.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me . . . to preach deliverance to the captives . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised. S. Luke iv. 18.

THE first sermon of our Lord, preached, too, in His own town of Nazareth, has for all of us a deep and special interest. There are in it many matters for serious meditation; but the point I wish to bring before you to-day is the fact which it so prominently foreshadowed, that when attacking any particular institutions the teaching of our Lord, when once it began to be thoroughly realised, was absolutely certain to disintegrate the system of slavery. The lesson of the brotherhood of man, the lesson of the priceless value of each individual soul, have only to be clearly grasped, and they must necessarily undermine that curse of humanity. It was only when the light of Christian love burned low that the idea of slavery could be tolerable; and those to whom it was so tolerable that they could engage in it could have only a very imperfect and rudimentary right to the name of Christian.

I. In the fifteenth century slavery was beginning to disappear in Europe under the strong moral forces of the Renaissance, when two events happened which gave it a new and fatal impulse. Voyages began to be made to populous and busy coasts hitherto unknown, where human beings were a common article of commerce, and thus the mind became familiar with the evil notion; and, on the other hand, the discovery of the new world, with its unlimited and unexplored treasures of unappropriated wealth, invited an immediate application of the system as a means for the rapid accumulation of wealth. When one thinks that it has been said by a thoughtful Christian writer that during four hundred years men, women, and children were torn from all whom they knew, the lovely scenes of farm and forest around which their childish imaginations had entwined themselves, and in which all their simple affections were stored, and sold on the coasts of Africa to foreign traders; that not one per cent. of the wretched captives survived the dreadful horrors of the march of many hundreds, and sometimes many thousands, of miles to the seaboard; that they were chained between low decks, so that there was not even room to writhe, and thus, in filth and disease and loneliness, the dead often manacled to the living, made that unspeakable middle passage, the corpses each morning being thrown into the sea, the living, when temporarily released, plunging into the ocean as the least of suffering, the sick dying from ache of heart and sickness for home; that during all these hundreds of years the

sighs and groans and prayers of this most unhappy and most forlorn of creatures rose to heaven, and that when they reached the new world they were consigned only to a less degree of misery in the mines, or under the lash in the fields of corn and rice; that many millions of harmless, pathetic savages were thus treated; that in one century, of the three and a quarter millions of slaves imported to one country alone, Great Britain, two hundred and fifty thousand were thrown into the sea on the passage, one may well feel that this is, indeed, the great and chief crime of history, the crime before which all others pale in enormity and wickedness. Worse still, the guilt of this abomination rests on the Mediæval Church. By all its influence it supported both the royal grants for purchasing negroes, and by the subsequent policy by which slavery was planted and perpetuated in Spanish America, the dark stain of the African slave-trade and of human bondage on the New Continent is for ever on its garments. It is a strange travesty on the religion of love that the Spanish government concluded more than ten treaties, authorising the sale of more than five hundred thousand human beings, and received from it a tax of over fifty millions of pounds in the name of the most Holy Trinity.

II. Great Britain owes a debt to Africa which she can never repay. So gigantic a crime, it has been said, in the full light of modern Christianity, is one of the most discouraging facts in history. The least approach to the trade would be forbidden by the most elementary principles of the teaching of our Lord. When an English prelate, John Bishop of Bristol, could sign the treaty of Utrecht, 'to love one's neighbour as one's self' must have belonged to another age and another religion. And all the while our Lord was pleading in glory for His blind and erring kingdom on earth, and in every Church throughout the realm of Christendom He was saying year by year as time rolled on, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me . . . to preach deliverance to the captives . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised.'

The Christian policy of this country in the abolition of the slave-trade has been long recognised as a question of national duty and not in the smallest degree of party politics. In national duty all and each of us have a direct concern.

If we and such as we are only earnest in our faith and true to our responsibility, and united and unfaltering in counsel, the day may yet dawn when Great Britain will have put an end to these appalling horrors, and we shall be able to sing with a fulness of meaning which was not present in our psalm this morning: 'This shall be written for the generation to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord; for He hath looked down from the height of

TRINITY SUNDAY

His sanctuary: from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.' ARCHDEACON SINCLAIR.

God's Revelation to Man.

O come, let us worship and fall down; and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
PSALM XCV. 6.

TRINITY SUNDAY has been characterised as the festival of Revelation. Every other great festival calls upon us to commemorate some fact, such as the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, by which God has been pleased to teach and bless us. To-day we are called upon not to commemorate a fact, but to contemplate a truth—a truth the most elementary, the most final, the most awful, the most illimitable, the most practical which can be grasped by the faith of man. It is a festival peculiar to the Western Church. And it was not until the year 1260 that it was fixed upon the octave of Whit-Sunday. It was a wise and blessed ordinance to set this day apart. Distinguish it altogether, I entreat you, from the insistance upon a particular phrase. It would be an unspeakable degradation to look on Trinity Sunday as merely the flaunting of an Athanasian shibboleth, or as chiefly made for the glorification of a creed bristling with abstract terms of which the philosophic meaning is necessarily unintelligible to nine persons out of ten by whom they are repeated. Were it only this, Trinity Sunday would dwindle into a mere clerical, or ecclesiastical, or theological festival, of very little use to the yearning heart of humanity, of very little significance for erring and suffering souls. If this were all, Trinity Sunday could kindle no strong enthusiasm, and stir, at the best, with a languid sympathy. Ah, no! Trinity Sunday is for a purpose far diviner than this. It is not idly speculative, but it is intensely real. It is our claim and witness that our brief human life is not spanned by the impure and narrow horizon of the visible; it is our glorious acknowledgment that we trust in a living God who made heaven and earth, and that this God is our Saviour, and that He may dwell in our very hearts by faith. To-day we turn from the earth and man to see a vision of all things in God. With awful reverence, and yet with glad confidence, our hope enters the veil, and we stand boldly before the throne of the eternal God, to gaze upon a will which is love, upon a power which is sacrifice, upon a wisdom which is holiness. To-day the soul is silent that God may speak. And since we know that minds so feeble and

so finite as ours cannot possibly grasp the infinite, we are not troubled by the unfathomable mystery if the eternal glory as we gaze upon the One resolves itself from the One into the Three, and as we gaze upon the Three blends into the eternal One.

I. If man be without God what is there in store for him and for the world wherein he dwells? For him, nothing but the blind necessity which dooms him to swift obliteration; for the world, nothing but the ultimate chill of an ice-bound chaos, and the stillness of an universal death. In the farthest wilds, in the deepest solitudes of nature, men have been enabled to see God. Giordano Bruno in his dreary prison touched a straw which lay upon the floor and said from that straw he could prove the being of God. The poor sailors of the *Erebus* and *Terror*, when they had, as it were, taken the wings of the morning to fly into the uttermost parts of the sea, saw God even there in those heaped and crushing ice-floes, amid the storms which swept the grim cones of Antarctic volcanoes, or when they gazed upon the auroral fires amid the Arctic night.

II. But we belong to a guilty and fallen race, and sin has raised a fearful barrier between man and God. God is there always in the meridian, but man sees Him not, and will not see Him. When there hangs over this city a dense fog, grey or black, or of lurid yellow, we see no sky, we feel no sunlight, we gasp in the sulphurous fume which our own heart-fires have breathed forth, and which hangs like a funeral pall between us and heaven. Even so do men exhale a murky fog of sin from the poisonous marshes of their own hearts, until many have ceased to have any hope, and are without God in the world. But the great green Bible of the world was not enough for man. It needed a fresh revelation to revive for us the glory of our Father's countenance; and, surely, there can be no better proof of love infinite and unwearied than that the Father gave it us. Man had sunk into crime and hypocrisy; the whole world was filled with the fury of the oppressor, the misery of the captive, the agony of the hopeless, and the shame of the unclean; but God who made our race would not abandon it to its guilt and ruin; He reconciled us unto Himself. At the brightness of His presence our clouds removed, He scattered with this light our sin-wrought blindness; He sent His own Son to reveal and to redeem. The Son of Man came that we might understand Him that is true. Man could not complain that God was unknowable, and that this immensity and omnipotence did but crush our feebleness into the dust. No, but the Word became Flesh that we might see God in man, that men should find a covering from the storm, a shelter from the heat, 'the shadows of a great rock in a weary land.' When we die a face like our face shall receive us, and a hand like our own hand shall fling open to us the gates of everlasting

life. Yes, in the form of man the Son of Man walked through the cornfields of Galilee, died upon the Cross of Golgotha, and, ascending into heaven, took the glorified body of our manhood to the very throne of God. 'Let it be,' says our great Hooker, 'accounted folly, or frenzy, or fury, or whatsoever; it is our wisdom and our comfort; we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned and God hath suffered, that God hath made Himself the sin of men, and that men are made the righteousness of God.'

III. We have seen man guilty, we have seen man redeemed and forgiven; it was still needful that man should be holy. He could not have been saved had he not been justified; he cannot be justified unless he be further sanctified. The death, of course, would have been forgotten, and would have been unavailing had it been an isolated act of mercy done for us, and no other aid vouchsafed, but God had yet His best, highest mercy in store for us. 'It is good for you,' said our Lord to His disciples, 'that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come to you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you, and He shall show you of the Father, He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. He shall be in you, He shall guide you into all truth.' And so we are living in the last era of God's high dispensations, the era of the Holy Spirit of grace. God would not leave His work half done. To save a guilty race Christ died; to preserve a redeemed race the Spirit came. Christ was God manifest in the Flesh. The Holy Spirit is the eye by which we see Him. Fatherhood, redemption, holiness—He made us, He redeemeth us, He sanctifieth us. Could there be greater love than this? God is righteous, and God is light, and God is love. The Father is love, the Son is love, and the Holy Ghost is love, and yet there are not three loves but one love; and if that be true, he therefore that would be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

DEAN FARRAR.

The Trinity in Unity.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen. 2 CORINTHIANS xvii. 14.

THE doctrine which is the object of this day to enforce upon our hearts, the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, is not a matter of indifference, not one that may be accepted or rejected at pleasure, but a vital and capital article of our faith; one which, resting upon Scriptural proof, demands not only our rational acquiescence, but our utmost gratitude and love: one which, if established, makes the

Christian religion what it is, or, if groundless, must drag down the Christian religion in its fall.

The only question, therefore, is, whether there is sufficient evidence in the Scriptures for the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity? We will, by God's assistance, endeavour to answer this question concisely; only reminding you, that the detailed proof of a doctrine which is so intimately interwoven with the whole texture of the sacred Scriptures, cannot by any conciseness be comprised within the limits of a discourse.

I. In the first place, therefore, we read throughout Holy Writ the most distinct assurance of the unity of God. 'Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord He is God, there is none else beside Him.' 'I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me.' 'Who hath taught it from that time? Have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.' 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord': a passage expressly quoted by our Saviour Himself. This one God is uniformly represented as the only Creator, Preserver, and governor of all things, as the only object of worship, as a jealous God, 'who will not give His glory to another.'

We find, on the other hand, in the same volume which asserts the unity of the Godhead, the name and the attributes of this one God assigned severally, or jointly, to three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost is universally mentioned in Scripture as a distinct person from the Father and the Son, and yet as Himself God. On two occasions, His presence was signified by a bodily appearance, at the Baptism of our Lord, and at the Feast of Pentecost. His agency is described as that of a real person, in terms which do not grammatically admit of any other sense except that of personality; He is mentioned as proceeding, as sent, as descending from heaven; as 'another Comforter,' as the personal substitute of Christ glorified, as the guide and witness to all truth, as speaking by the prophets, or the Divine Inhabitant of the temple of the Christian's heart, where God alone should reign. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is declared to be more unpardonable than blasphemy against the Son of Man, nay, even than every other kind of blasphemy. Again, Ananias, in lying to the Holy Ghost, is said to lie unto God. The Holy Ghost, in short, being proved to be a distinct person, the numerous passages in which His agency is mentioned, as the supreme head of the Church, can lead to no other conclusion, than that He is God.

II. 'Go ye and teach all nations,' said our blessed Lord, 'baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Now, surely, as baptism is a covenant between God and man, it can only be administered to man in the name of God. 'In the name of the Father' no one will dispute, to be words equivalent to 'in the name of God'; and the expressions 'in the name of the Son,' and 'in the name of the Holy Ghost,' respectively, can mean nothing less than 'in the name of God'; because if anything less were intended, then the name of God would be placed without any mark of difference by the side of the names of inferior beings; a supposition perfectly incredible when applied to a form of words conveying the privileges of a heavenly religion. I again repeat, that 'God is a jealous God,' and that His glory He does not give to another, as He clearly does if the names of inferior beings are placed on an equality with His own.

The same observations apply to the text: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with us all.' This blessing is evidently a blessing in the name of God; the very name of God is used in one clause of the blessing, and that clause not the first nor the last, but the middle one. No difference is made between the several branches of this blessing, but the wish is expressed equally for the presence of the Three Persons amongst the Corinthians. 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,' and 'the communion of the Holy Ghost,' are placed precisely in the same grammatical connection with 'the love of God.' S. Paul was no careless writer, and if he had not been convinced that there are three Persons and one God, he would have carefully avoided any expression which could, or rather which must, lead the reader's mind to that doctrine. The association of three names in one divine blessing is either blasphemy, or it can only be satisfactorily explained by that doctrine which is already established by independent proof.

On all these grounds, therefore, we are drawn irresistibly to the conclusion, that there is one uncreate, incomprehensible, eternal, Almighty, Lord God; that in the Unity of this Godhead there are three Persons; and that in all things as touching the Godhead, 'none is afore or after another, but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.'

R. E. JELF.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Simplicity of Religion.

IT is as clear and simple as the universal sunlight. In spite of all the creeds and all the catechisms, in spite of all the metaphysical theology, in spite of all the criticism and all the controversy, whatever is essential in religion is open to the understanding of a little child. 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.' That is what it all comes back to. Differences enough, diversities enough, but one and the same Holy Spirit, divine Saviour, heavenly Father, behind them all.

The subject is the simplicity of religion.

I. Religion, above all things, ought to be simple, because it is meant for so many simple people. It is a message for everybody, and must needs be capable of translation into everybody's language. And 'everybody' is a wide word. It cannot possibly be made to mean only the professors in the theological seminaries.

Religion is a universal need of man. It means instruction in perplexity, strength in temptation, comfort in grief; it is an answer to the universal questions: What am I? And what am I here for? And whither am I going? We all want to know that—all of us—not the philosophers alone. The great fact of sin and the great fact of pain get into every life. People who cannot read nor write walk along the ways of temptation, and look into the black depths of open graves, and so have need of the guidance and consolation of religion.

The discussions of theology ought not to perplex any but the theologians. They have no more to do with religion than an acquaintance with chemistry has to do with eating, or a knowledge of geology has to do with the appreciation of the beauties of a landscape. We can love God though we may not be able to recite the Athanasian Creed. We can read our Bibles and get help out of them without needing to know anything about theories of inspiration. The nature of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not dependent upon the result of the controversies about it. Christ died for our sins. No matter about the doctrines of the atonement.

The difficulties of religion belong to the scientific side of it. They are difficulties of definition. They are of the same sort with the difficulties which meet men in every direction of scientific thought. They have no more bearing upon common life than any other metaphysics.

As for the differences of religion, they arise, for the most part, out of the natural differences of human nature. They are due to temperament.

II. Religion is meant for all kinds of people; and there are a great many kinds of people. People are different; and a universal religion must have room in it for innumerable differences.

That is what Christ taught. That is what S. Paul taught. We have not even yet learned the lesson very well, but in the days of the beginnings of Christianity people had not learned it at all. It was accounted heresy. The orthodox contended in those days that nobody could really be religious unless he was religious in just one way. He must become a Jew: he must keep every rubric of the Hebrew law.

Even Peter needs a revelation out of the sky before he can be persuaded to admit a Gentile into the Christian society. Even Paul must first be blinded by a light from heaven before he can shut his eyes to the difference between the Greek and the Hebrew and care no more about it.

That there could be varieties of faith and practice in the same Church was a thing which to a good many people in that old day was as incredible, as undesirable, as dangerous, and as pernicious as it is to a good many good people still. The very first thing which the Christian religion did was to turn its back upon exclusion and uniformity. Alone among all the religious teachers of his time, Christ recognised the divine right of human differences. Christ saw that one man differs from another.

When the Christian missionaries from France and the Christian missionaries from Wales met in pagan England, they agreed that there was a great work for them to do, a work that needed all the energy they had. But the French said to the Welsh, 'First, before we can work together, you must cut your hair exactly as we cut ours.'

When the 'low' churchmen, who were then called 'Puritans,' met the orthodox of their day in conference at Hampton Court, the orthodox said: 'It is, indeed, a blessed thing that brethren shall dwell together in unity, but, dearly beloved, if you would say your prayers with us you must, above all else, wear the same kind of prayer-gown that we wear. Not one of you must be seen without a surplice.' The result was the Presbyterian communion.

People are different; let them think differently. Whatever really helps is right. Whatever hinders is wrong. And what hinders one may help another. If the Church is a sect, if it is a little petty, religious confraternity, then set Procrustes's bed at the door of it, and measure every comer, and cut off all the tall people's feet, and stretch out all the short people. But if the Church is a great, broad, catholic

Church, such as Christ meant it to be, let everybody in, and keep everybody in who loves Him and wants to serve Him.

GEORGE HODGES.

The Triune Sanctuary

Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; but let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary. ISAIAH viii. 13, 14.

THE higher we get in the school of truth, the more does God Himself—for what he is in Himself—become the subject of thought, the object of desire, and the rest of the soul.

Natural religion just touches God in the outer circle. Revealed religion brings us a little nearer. It is conversant with great plans and systems—of providence and grace. It admits us into higher manifestations of God. But the gospel brings us into contact with God Himself. Through the mystery of the Holy Trinity we arrive at some realisation of Him. The Eternal Spirit is represented in the Son, just as a thought is represented by the word which utters it. The Eternal Spirit is revealed by spirit, which, being a part of Himself, and coming and dwelling in our hearts, communicates to us the being of God.

So we are brought into intercourse with God Himself. We approximate to a moral perception of God. We know, not His works, nor His word; but Himself. We have not His gifts, but Him. 'This God is our God for ever and ever.'

I. But I must remind you that the Bible, and all the means of grace, and the Cross of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, are all for one end; to bring men into the enjoyment of God. And that, therefore, this is the distinctive mark of grace, that the believer (far above all things whatever, above and beyond the gospel, which is only its scaffolding), has communion with God and has repose in God.

The whole subject of Godhead is one of awe, and, if of awe, then dread. Some persons are offended at this. They stumble at that beautiful prayer in our Litany: 'That it may please Thee to give us a heart to love and dread Thee': and they think it inconsistent with the filial confidence and affection of a forgiven soul.

But they who speak so do not know the nature of the human mind. As many of us as are God's children, we do not, we ought not, we cannot fear and dread God, as though He were going to hurt us, and going to punish us. That is all over. 'We have not so learned Christ.' The punishment is all passed. It has expended itself upon our Head. But, because it is passed, and the more we

feel it to be passed, we fear, and we dread. David understood it: 'There is mercy with Thee that Thou mayest be feared.'

II. Let us look at it a little more closely.

The more you know of God, the more you feel the unfathomableness of the mystery of Godhead. Who can touch—with a thought—the great, cardinal doctrine of the Trinity, without feeling 'it is the deepest of mysteries'? 'One, Three,' and 'Three, One,' what can I say? I can only 'lay my hand upon my mouth,' and cast myself 'into the dust.'

And all mystery is awe. It is a rule of our being, that we must tremble when we stand on the margin of the unknown. You cannot go to the edge of deep, dark water, without a shudder! Therefore they who know most of God will most fear, not his anger, but simply His amazing greatness.

I cannot conceive a man endeavouring to throw his mind into the Trinity and not experiencing a thrill.

So we have seen it is in heaven. The triple ascription goes up to the Triune God, 'Holy! holy! holy! Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.' But, as they do it, 'they veil their faces, and they cast their crowns to the ground.'

All exceeding goodness has in it to most men a tinge of fear.

If you have a very superior friend, very learned, very holy, however you may love him, yet there is some sense of fear mingling with your affection for that man. It is the attitude of looking up.

Now carry on that thought to the highest, to absolute, essential wisdom, purity, perfection, and what must be the heart's language? 'Thou art fearful in praises, doing wonders.' 'It is high, I cannot attain to it.'

Moses said to God, 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.' God knew better than Moses what it was he asked. Therefore God placed Moses 'in the cleft of the rock, and covered him with His hand,' while He made a portion of His glory to pass by. And what effect had that partial view of God upon Moses? 'Moses made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth, and worshipped.'

Be suspicious of the love which is without awe. Remember, that our best acquaintance with God only shows us more the immensity of the fields of thought which no mind can traverse. And never attempt to reduce such a doctrine—as the one we are celebrating to-day—to the rules of reason, or to the grasp of understanding. It is, and ever must be, simply a pure matter of faith. Its seat is not in the head, but in the heart. It is not an intellectual attainment, but a great, primary, moral truth. And the only way to receive 'the Trinity,' and hold it rightly, is, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to feel devoutly, to commune humbly, and to walk closely.

As the God of your fear becomes the refuge of your safety, and the home of your peace, so He is the fountain of your holiness. The Shechinah shines within the veil; but, as you become familiar with the precincts of that holy place, you catch some of its rays, and reflect its glory.

It is a law—true alike to good or evil—that what we look on, and what we live in, we grow like. Live in a sanctuary of the mind of God, and you must grow God-like. The purity and the brightness of the great realities—with which you are always dealing—will leave, line by line, their impress upon your soul till the copy grows complete, and the transcript is perfect enough to go into the presence of God.

Safety, peace, holiness, woven in your heart into a triple grace, answer to the threefold glory of the awful Trinity. By a blessed reaction, as you live in God, God lives in you; and the sanctuary is finished for you, and in you; and that magnificent undertaking of God Himself is fulfilled: 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

Holiness to the Lord.

In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shal be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts. ZECHARIAH XIV. 20, 21

THIS text, indeed the whole chapter from which it is taken, is a highly figurative, prophetical description, coloured throughout with Jewish ideas and associations of that day of the Lord which we believe to have been fulfilled in the setting up of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which, as S. Paul tells us, 'old things have passed away and all things have become new.' The House of the Lord of Hosts is the Catholic Church of Christ; Jerusalem is the city which cometh down from above, free, the mother of us all; Judah is the heritage over which He who reckons His lineage from David sets up His everlasting throne; the priesthood is no longer a family or even a caste, but the whole company of believers, the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

TRINITY SUNDAY

I. According to the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as you will readily see if you care to read through the seventh chapter, under the law there were many priests, but under the gospel, in the highest sense, one priest alone—the one who is consecrated for evermore. In the Christian Church, the priesthood—in the secondary sense, in the sense in which if there is the slightest truth in these two passages from the Revelation which I have just read—is no longer vested in a caste, or family, or tribe, but derived into the whole company of believers, through the baptism or consecration of the Spirit who thenceforth offereth through the appointed ministers of the sanctuary their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise and thanksgiving which are made acceptable to God through Him from whom they have received their consecration. No truth, I take it, can be plainer than that the royal priesthood, the holy priesthood spoken of by S. Peter and S. James is in the aggregate composed of those who, in the language of S. Paul to the Ephesians, have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus. There were many points of difference between the law and the gospel; such differences as one might expect to find between two dispensations, which though pointing to the one same great end yet took, the one a lower, and the other a higher way of reaching it. I purpose to dwell mainly upon one. Both dispensations, the dispensation of the law given by Moses, and the dispensation of grace by Jesus Christ, rest upon one eternal immutable principle, and that the principle represented by S. Paul, that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' To enforce this, to bring it home to the conscience and, so to speak, to the very eyes and senses of men, was the real object of all those ordinances which look so cumbrous to us now, and which in the estimate of S. Paul sink into the condition of weak and beggarly elements after Christ had come to rob them of their significance and power. No more need for us of the High Priest's mitre with its inscribed motto of 'Holiness to the Lord'; no more need of sacrifices made again and again because of their inadequacy to clear the conscience year after year; no more need of subtle distinctions between clean and unclean, of holy sacraments, of meats and drinks, days and new moon, which as Paul tells the Colossians were shadows of things to come. The great centre of holiness was that which was set up before the eyes of the Galatians, and from which S. Paul marvelled that they so soon began to turn away. It was Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The priests who were to be clothed with righteousness were the whole sanctified renewed people of God; the holiness which should be in His house for ever; the holiness in the beauty of which He was to be worshipped, was to be the holiness of the worshippers internally, not externally.

II The essential principles of religion, or if you like to change the phrase, the essential principles of Christianity are, it seems to me, in danger, in this day of ours, from many influences acting adversely to them from many sides. There is the adventurous spirit of scientific inquiry, proud, and justly proud of its conquests in its own domain, claiming to submit all phenomena to its own tests, and exercise the same sovereignty over the intellectual and the spiritual as in the material world. There is a yet deadlier spirit of scepticism abroad catching eagerly at every flaw in the evidence of Christianity, not so much because that evidence is doubtful as because the revelation itself which rests upon the evidence is distasteful to it; not so much on intellectual as on moral grounds; not so much because the proof is insufficient for the understanding as because the check is too stringent on the appetites. And this is a scepticism which I call the deadlier of the two, because it is fraught with loose desires and a heart refusing to be bound by a moral law. And there is besides the terrible undermining influence of the daily secular life we all are leading, either in the weary chase of evanescent pleasure, or in the hot and restless pursuit of wealth, or in the anxious compassing of some vain object of ambition, or in the daily recurrent mechanical drudgery of the office, or the counter, or workshop, in which, it may be, we try to gain an honest livelihood, yet, after all, a livelihood but little animated by Christian motives or brightened by Christian hopes.

You must place something higher than self as the motive of your conduct if you are to taste that joy and peace in believing, that conviction that all things are working together for good, which is the secret of all true happiness. If we could get rid of the selfishness that deforms and disfigures so much of our modern life, we should get rid, methinks, of the main element of its gloom, its unrest, its bitterness, its weariness. To live for others, to think for others, to labour for others, would be found the surest source of that inward satisfaction which, blessed be God, is after all, the greatest gift that God bestows on the spirit of man. I have known men pause, tossed to and fro by sceptical doubts, but I have never known a man who looked on life from the Christian point of view, who either felt or thought his own existence to be a puzzle, or the outer world a maze; or if, for a moment, he did seem lost as in a labyrinth, and uncertain which way to turn, the clew was at once recovered the moment he paused to think which way his duty bade him go. Those that croak and take desponding views of things, say that the world is lapsing into chaos again; and certainly our modern social system, as one sees it before his eyes in London, contrasting the great west with the greater east, the wealth and refinement of the one, and the poverty

and coarseness and degradation of the other, and a great chasm fixed betwixt the two and no bridges, or only very narrow and very frail ones thrown across, over which travel angels in human form, whose visits, alas! like most angel visits, are, after all, too few and far between, bringing the blessed message that is to be brought from east to west, and from west to east again. I say, certainly, our modern social system is hardly what the Greeks call a 'cosmos,' it is not a beautiful thing to gaze on, just now, but it could be made so sooner and perhaps more effectually than ever it was before. There are mightier intellectual, moral and spiritual forces at work in this epoch of ours than ever worked in the epochs that have gone before. I say this so-called chaos might soon become a cosmos if only the motives of those who work in our midst were subordinated to the master spirit of duty, and the good of all were sought by each rather than the advantage of the few.

It is quite false to suppose that in a democratic age, which I suppose every one feels our age to be, the scale of public virtue and the standard of national life should be low. On the contrary, if true to this essential principle that the object of all good government and all social systems is the greatest happiness of the greatest number, the result would be such as to make every noble and generous bosom leap for joy. But if this is ever to be adequately realised, the standard of national life must be high, and the scale of public virtue be high too. Christianity has nothing to apprehend from the so-called democratic tendencies of the age, its real danger is from its anarchical tendencies, and these have their root in self-seeking and deadness of the conscience to the sense of duty. These thoughts then, which must be obvious to every reflective mind, seem to flow from the great leading thought of the text, that all Christ's people are priests; that every priest ought to be holy; that the very office of a priest is sacrifice, and that the sacrifice of self on the altar of duty.

JAMES FRASER.

The Empire of the Grave.

(*A sermon to the Medical Profession*)

Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.
ECCLESIASTES xii. 5.

LET me venture to ask, what is that trenchant fact that is brought out in the text; what is our relation to that fact; and what are the teachings that ought to come home to us all from that relation?

I. Now, first of all, about the fact itself there can be no serious

question. It is as plain as fact can be, brought out in distinct, clear, vivid, and most awful colours: the universality of the empire of the grave. And then in the way it is brought home in the text there is something sufficiently striking. The book of Ecclesiastes we certainly all of us acknowledge, whatever theory we have about its writings, to be undoubtedly the expression of a personal experience. It is the expression of the experience of a man who possessed large and wondrous powers of enjoyment in this world, and abundant resources for gratifying those capacities. Solomon tried them all. The enticements that came to him from special pleasures, the enthusiasms that were kindled by a great ecclesiastical dignity, the fascinations that were brought home to him by the power and the splendour of his royalty,—all these found a ready and an abundant response in that luxuriant and sensual nature. Solomon tried them all. All that the world could give was poured, and poured abundantly, into the lap of the monarch who knew how to enjoy it. And what then? Why, then, this followed. Then there at last remained to him the experience of a jaded, sensuous career; and that experience came joined to an intellect at once large and enlightened. These two powers, experience and wisdom, united in one cry, that all that was only of this world was simply emptiness, and that the one sovereignty that seemed undoubted, that seemed unconquerable, in the eye of the eastern monarch, was the sovereignty of the empire of the grave. You and I, I think, will scarcely contest that the fact of death as thus brought home by Solomon is witnessed by us all. What else? Pause for a moment and think of it. What else has added to life so much of sorrow amidst much of joy? What else was it but the governing thought of that wide-stretched empire that made the Grecian poet think so sadly, and speak in such grave and tragic verse? What else was it that puzzled the philosophers of Rome? What else was it that made the weird lines of our mediæval Europe and mediæval England so thrilling and so powerful? What else is it but the inexorable thought, the perpetually reiterated truth, that you and I are subjects to the empire of the grave! We will not dispute the fact.

And now, let me ask for an instant, What is your relation to that truth? Well, I think that you will not quarrel with me for the assertion that, doubtless, you are bold men in your profession. You are going out to the battle of death. You array yourselves from your boyish days for what seems a hopeless contest. You are the leaders, so to speak, in a forlorn hope—a hope that has always been forlorn; and yet you go on. Inch by inch you try to stop the progress of the King of Terrors. Foot by foot you stand against him and endeavour to bar his path. We clergymen talk of a future from

the pulpit; you doctors go down to the present in the house and the street. We talk of the tragic hand of that frightful enemy: you cross swords with him, and say that, at least, you will do your best. Certainly you are brave: certainly you deserve the compliment of men who are doing a hard service with apparently very little hope of a successful issue. You are strugglers with death. And then what do you bring to bear against that great, that tremendous enemy? You bring weapons that no man ought to despise—certainly that I should not despise. You bring all that science has taught you, all that invention has suggested, all that learning has accumulated from the days of Galen to the days of some of the present lecturers in your London hospitals. Everything that man's brain or man's necessities have drawn together or elicited from your thoughts, these you bring to bear in that tremendous battle, the battle with death. And with what result? What have you done? Perhaps you seem to throw him back for a moment, and to retard his progress; but the advantage is scarcely more than seeming. Perhaps for a time you have hurt his henchman—his auxiliaries—the mysterious power of pain; but after all is said, and after all is tried, what has been the result? Can you say, really and honestly, for a moment, that you have thrown back one yard or one inch the frontier of the grave? In spite of all the London hospitals, in spite of all accumulated science, in spite of all your bravery and all your knowledge, still, as truly as when Solomon wrote in his dejection and his despondency, 'Man, day by day and hour by hour, is going to his long home, and the mourners are going about the streets.'

Well, if that be the case, what then? Is there no meaning in your proud profession? Is there no meaning in your strong and earnest work? I take it that there is. Dwell for one moment longer, in order that we may learn the fruits of this relationship with this battle with death, on what nature says as well as revelation. You know better than I can tell you how constantly nature has most plainly witnessed to the wide range and the deep depth of physical evil. You know that medical men have argued again, and yet again, that in nature they see designs of the beneficence of God. I, for one, think that they have not argued amiss; and yet, to be just, we preachers are bound to look at the other side of the question, and to remember what nature does say of the sovereignty of the empire of the grave. Is it not true that there are multitudes of creatures plainly before us in the world of nature who, whatever powers of enjoyment may come to them, are simply left unguarded against the attacks of death? Is it not true that there are multitudes of creatures, with certainly powers of large enjoyment, who are left in the pathless paths, in the trackless tracks, of the wide and rolling

sea, simply remaining to testify to the dreadfulness of the struggle, and to their inability to cope with the powers of the grave? Is it not true, I ask you again, that geology has witnessed awfully to the same sad spectacle? Is it not true that as you unearth the memories and mysteries of a former time from the grave of this burial earth, there are found the forms of those giant creatures who have struggled, and struggled in vain, against the empire of death? And, further, is it not true that the progress of our human life, is rather a progress to decay? May I not be allowed to sit down for a moment, in spite of my Christian faith and my hope for eternity, in an agony of tears when I look at my child, and remember that, as its face is growing fairer with the brightness and the strength of glory, it is growing fairer for the grave? Do we not see in nature and at home that, after all, there is that constant, that awful, witness of nature writing down the story of want and ruin,—of everywhere, everywhere, the empire of the grave?

II. Your work teaches a mighty consolation. It may bring home to men the power and the meaning of suffering. Suffering—sad and dark enough it is. If you and I are sensitive, we fear to think how deeply we must one day surely suffer. But suffering, do you not know it, is the path to power. My brother, my sister, remember that never can ye do a work for God, never can ye nobly live as souls should live in bodies that must die, never can ye think and toil as those must think and toil who are marching with their hearts ever beating funeral marches to the grave, never unless we suffer. It is by suffering that we are made strong. It is by the agony of doubt earnestly faced—faithfully, earnestly, prayerfully, humbly met, that we gain, by God's mercy, the power of stalwart faith. But doubt is suffering. It is by pain of mind that we enter into the thought and sympathy of our kind, and lift them out of degradation and death. But that agony was suffering. My brothers of the medical profession, ye know that when ye minister to pain, if ye minister religiously, ye are wisely and rightly assisting in that which is a very awful but a very blessed power; for ye know it was transfigured by the tragic Passion of the Lord. To assist and to console, are they not great works for you? Is there anything more? One thing. Ye witness to a blessed truth. The battle with death is a witness to a fact that lies before us, the thought, dear to every human heart, that sleep means awakening, and that death means life. Did you ever rise on Easter Day and stand in the garden of the resurrection, and feel the morning winds about you, and see the freshful flowers, and look at the face of joy unspeakable in him who liveth and was dead? If so, ye knew the meaning of awakening life—the joy of resurrection.

CANON KNOX LITTLE.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

The Fatherhood of God. In the New Testament, God is made known to us as a Father; and a brighter feature of that book cannot be named. Our worship is to be directed to Him as our Father. Our whole religion is to take its character from this view of the Divinity. In this He is to rise always to our minds. And what is it to be a father? It is to communicate one's own nature, to give life to kindred beings; and the highest function of a father is to educate the mind of the child, and to impart to it what is noblest and happiest in his own mind. God is our Father, not merely because He created us, or because He gives us enjoyment, for He created the flower and the insect, yet we call Him not their father. This bond is a spiritual one. This name belongs to God because He frames spirits like Himself, and delights to give them what is most glorious and blessed in His own nature.

The Infinite God. Unity added to infinity increases it not, any more than a foot added to infinite space. What is finite vanishes before that which is infinite, and becomes absolutely nothing. For instance, our understanding, in respect of God's; our righteousness, compared with the Divine.

God is Light. S. John i. 5. As the sentence, 'God is a Spirit' (S. John iv. 24) is immediately followed by 'and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth,' so this sentence must be taken as a principle, the application of which is in the sequel. The sentence is through and through ethical and practical. S. John wants no science without practice. He does not allow an enlightenment of the mind without a corresponding bias and purifying of the will.

God (the name). This word is spelt in four letters in almost every language, viz.: Latin, *Deus*; French, *Dieu*; Greek, θέος; German, *Gott*; Scandinavian, *Odin*; Swedish, *Codd*; Hebrew, *Hdon*; Syrian, *Adad*; Persian, *Syra*; Tartarian, *Idga*; Spanish, *Dios*; East Indian, *Esgi*, or *Zeni*; Turkish, *Addi*; Egyptian, *Aumn*, or *Zeut*; Japanese, *Zain*; Peruvian, *Lian*; Wallachian, *Zene*; Etrurian, *Chur*; Irish, *Dieh*; Arabian, *Alfa*. The name appropriated by the Saxon nations ('the Good') is unequalled, except by the most venerable Hebrew name, Jehovah.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Nature of God. 'God is spirit' (S. John iv. 24); 'God is light' (1 S. John i. 5). 'God is love' (1 S. John iv. 5).

All from the pen of S. John are the briefest and profoundest definitions. or Divine oracles rather, concerning the nature of God, which can be found anywhere. The first refers mainly to His metaphysical, the second to His intellectual, the third to His moral essence; but of course the line cannot be distinctly drawn.

First Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE, ... 1 S. JOHN IV. 7-21.
GOSPEL, ... S. LUKE XVI. 19-31.
FIRST MORNING LESSON, JOSHUA III. 7-IV. 15.
FIRST EVENING LESSON, JOSHUA V. 13-VI. 21, OR JOSHUA XXIV.
SECOND LESSON, . . ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Character the One Test of Merit.

Many that are first shall be last, and the last first. S. MATTHEW XIX. 30.

T is one of the first qualities of the teaching of Christ that in judging men it goes deeply down into life, throws aside the weight of prejudice and opinion, and more often than not results in a complete reversal of human judgment. In ordinary life we go but very little way beneath the surface of things. If we see a man rich and honoured, and highly placed, we do not hesitate, as a rule, to call him happy, and to put him first in our order, our arrangement of the world. But Christ, with that absolutely unerring insight which distinguished Him from all the sons of men, Christ everywhere sweeps aside the appearance, and points us to the reality. If you would judge the worth, or even the happiness of a man, He says, then the external circumstances of his life, his power, or position, his popularity or social acquaintance, his poverty or his riches—all these are perfectly insignificant and indifferent. They are not factors in the judgment at all, and if you would judge rightly, you must turn away from those trivial facts, and look into the man himself, and see

what is there. So looking and so judging, as God looks and judges, you will find both in this world and in the world to come, that the first may be last and the last first.

It is so even with yourselves. The path of happiness is not so simple as men would have us think. Do you aim at riches? He turns round instantly upon you and says, 'You cannot serve God and mammon.' Would you gain the world? He tells you it cannot be done except at the expense of your own soul. Would you be great among men? He puts before you as the type of greatness a little child. And everywhere in the gospels, and especially in this gospel of S. Matthew, Matthew the publican, who had given up so much for Christ, and who alone out of all the evangelists twice repeats this phrase, everywhere we find this rejection of ordinary standards, this reversal of human judgments, this deliberate and repeated assertion that the first may be found last and the last first.

And yet it is strange, passing strange, that we, having not only the guidance of the spiritual teaching of Christ, but also a practical experience of life which teaches us exactly the same thing, and ought to be enough, one would think, of itself to save us from this error, that we should still so often cling to the appearance and ignore the reality, still judge men by what they seem rather than by what they are, still, in spite of the discipline and the testimony of poets, should suffer ourselves to be cheated and baffled.

The practical experience of life, I say, teaches us the same thing. But some who pride themselves on being men of experience, men of the world, assure us that these principles are altogether impracticable, and indeed impossible to maintain in a rough and critical world. He who is rich and influential, they say, is first, and must ever be first; he who is poor and insignificant is and will ever remain last. Any other standard of judgment than that can be only the visionary standard of a disappointed dreamer, trying to console himself for his failure in life.

Well, shallow and superficial as generally are the judgments of the practical world, we need not fear to accept the implied challenge, to take it even in its most difficult form, and to assert that not hereafter only, but here and now in the present order of things, the first may be found last and the last first. Is not that reversal of human judgment one of the perennial lessons of history? Look back for example into the dark Middle Ages, to the time when power was worshipped, and the lust for gold was strong. Go to an obscure and humble village in the heart of Italy. You see there on a stormy night a young man, friendless and unknown, thrust out with scorn from his birthplace, and destined for ever after to wander through the world. Who would have said that night that there was the first

of men, first even then in the immutable decision of God, and seen to be first in his open influence over his fellows? The man was Francis of Assisi, and weighed against his influence not all the power of kings and popes and emperors of Christendom would have availed to turn the balance. Or look a little further back at that strange drama in Palestine, the life and death of a Galilean peasant, in one of the least important provinces of the great empire of Rome. Judged by appearances, His position was even more hopeless than that of the Italian apostle, for all the authority of the secular, as well as of the religious world was ranged against Him, and with such success that the world destroyed Him in the end, as it always crucifies when it does not ignore its truest benefactors. Who would have thought before His death, still more after it, that His toil and sorrow could have any effect, that any hope, however simple, could be realised for one who died the death of a slave, rejected and despised, forsaken even by His own disciples, and leaving His life-work shattered and broken on the Cross? Yet now His law reigns supreme above that of the Roman judge by whom He was condemned, and His throne is set higher than the throne of the Cæsars. Such are the contrasts of history, and such is the irony of God. The dull and practical world comes round at last to the feet of the dreamer. We build with tears of affection the tombs of the prophets whom our fathers slew. Truth avenges herself in the end, and the last are first and the first last.

The constant repetition of human judgment is due to the fact that we generally start with the wrong criterion of merit. The criterion of merit cannot be anything external—position, occupation, or what you will. It can only be a moral criterion, a test of character. And as in judging character you have to take account of motives and purposes, and unseen circumstances, of the temptations to which a man is exposed, and the surroundings in which he is placed, and the thousand other things not easy to measure or track out, it may very easily happen that even our moral judgments are often mistaken, that the man who seems very good to us may in reality be less good than one apparently inferior. Hence if we could view society as Christ saw it, we should certainly see a society strangely different from that about us, quite altered in its arrangements, and all the persons distributed. Dives might not seem so enviable, nor Lazarus so wretched as now. We might make some humiliating discoveries there, and our self-complacency might be somewhat rudely disturbed. In fact, in the only true society seen as Christ saw it, seen as God sees it now, we might find our servant or our poor neighbour occupying a higher rank, and ourselves, or men whom we have chiefly honoured and esteemed, condemned with shame to take the lowest place. For on

character, on nothing else than character, depends the rank of any man in the society of God. So was it proclaimed by one who, sitting in the treasury of the Temple, and knowing the hearts of men, looked on the rich givers with their abundance, and the poor widow in her penury, and pronounced with a special emphasis that she had cast in more than all.

Character, then, is the one test of merit. That is the principle of Christ. But if so, it follows that the external conditions of life are in themselves neither good nor bad, but, as the Stoic held, indifferent. Prosperity, though always difficult to bear nobly, is not necessarily fatal to character. The man who is first in outward circumstances may be also first in the inner life. For some have riches and power like greatness thrust upon them, and it would be absurd to suppose that they must necessarily deteriorate. No. If their new condition has come to them unsought at the expense of higher things, then though it will do them little good, it will do them little harm. And yet it is significant that a people with the exquisite moral penetration of the Greeks should have regarded excessive prosperity as almost bad in itself. We find among the Greeks, not in the great tragedians alone, but in the very heart of the common people, a strong belief that riches and honour are more than dangerous to the man to whom they fall. Hence the Nemesis of the Greek tragedy, watching in the very hour of a man's triumph to drag him down. And so rooted in the Greek mind was this conception, that they believed that a man might suffer even for his father's good fortune, that the retribution of heaven would dog the steps of excessive prosperity to generation after generation. Such things they had seen in practical life, in a Xerxes, and in a Themistocles; and with the clear insight of an imaginative people, they had looked through appearances into the reality within. They knew, and Plato knew it when in his ideal commonwealth he would not suffer the ruling men to have any possessions, how often advancement in the world is followed by disaster in the soul.

And indeed both national and private life supply us with but too frequent examples of those for whom success has meant not gain but loss, loss in character, in self-control, loss in high aspiration, in mental power, and in all that makes man truly man. Perhaps we have seen the very tragedy played out before us. Perhaps we have known one who, by industry or good fortune or talent, has risen to a position of affluence and ease, and when we looked hopefully to see some widening effort, some fresh range of thought or feeling to which his new prosperity might open the doors, we have been obliged to watch him with eyes of sorrow and pity, while the old intellectual energy and the old spiritual force, with all their nascent possibilities, have been

first enervated and then obliterated by the insidious advance of a fatal luxury, until the golden dawn, so rich in strong promises, has closed on disenchantment, until all that we hoped or dreamed from that man, all that he dreamed and hoped from himself, had become things of the past, never to be realised; until at last he is so far fallen from his own true nature that as he plans to pull down his barns and build greater, he cannot even hear the bitter irony of the terrible voice, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul—upon which thou hast set so small a value, that human soul of thine, wonderful in its beauty, wonderful in its original potentiality—this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' Yes; it is a sadly common experience that might well teach us to beware lest if we rise to one of the first places in the judgment of men we sink to one of the last on the register of God.

From this principle of Christ I venture, in conclusion, to deduce two practical lessons. One is that, unknown to ourselves, others may be doing better service than we, may be capable of better work than we, if only they had our opportunities, may be more highly honoured by God than we, even the most unlikely men. Then self-esteem and self-contentment can find no room in our life. The first thing for every man to learn about himself is that he is absolutely unimportant, that the great drama of life in which he plays his most insignificant part will go on very well without him; that there is no man who is necessary even for the world's work, much less for God's, and that there are thousands ready to take his place and to fulfil his function. 'The true perfection of a man,' said S. Augustine, 'is to find out his own imperfections.'

The second message is, Be yourself. That, rightly and broadly considered, is the central message of all religion. Every chord of Christianity resounds with that note. Be yourself, your highest and best self. Whatever the environment in which you live, Be yourself, and you will find that from the strength and purity of that spiritual selfhood as energised in its element by the powers of God will issue all that is really good for you, and of those about you. Be yourself, your highest and best self, and you will realise with a clearness that cannot be denied, and with a certainty which cannot be shaken, that, whether you are rich or poor, whether you stand high or low in the estimation of mankind, whether you take this or that place in the judgment of the world, yet there is nothing that men can give you, and nothing that men can take away. It is on what you are eternally in your soul and inner being, and not on the changing circumstances and vicissitudes of life which lie beyond your control, that your prosperity depends. Your true self and its true reward both are in your own hands, and all else is but vanity. It is for you, and you alone, to decide, by your fidelity to truth, and your devotion to duty, whether you will or will not take here and hereafter one of

those first places in the Kingdom prepared by the All-Father of those that love Him. S. A. ALEXANDER.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

What God is.

God is love. 1 S. John iv. 8.

'GOD is love.' We say it easily with child-lips; it commends itself at once: for we have no meaning as yet to put into it, no interpretation to give, but that which our own springing life and buoyant imagination can gladly supply; and rightly, indeed, do we use the good gifts of a young heart in order to lay fast hold of the ennobling truth. But we cannot stop there; life moves on into new and changing scenes, it compels us to face the world of work and of fact; and what it asks of us is, not that we should ever abandon our first faith in goodness and love, but that we should learn its wider truth by growing experience of the actual concrete earth, which that love of God has fashioned, and filled, and impelled, so that our earliest rapture of devotion may, by constant contact with the heart of things, be taken and trained and disciplined and stayed and deepened and enlarged, until it become the inspiration of a burning faith which is enabled to detect the law of love alive and at work throughout the entire scheme of this very world in which our pilgrimage is passed—enabled to detect it always and everywhere, astir and triumphant, intermingled, interlaced, interpenetrating, girdling earth and sky and sea, with knitted cords that uphold and unite and enfold; and, so enabled, can salute it, and rejoice in, and thank it, and embrace it, and can pronounce that in the length and in the breadth, in the height and in the depth, the name of God is most assuredly love.

And yet the first and most obvious effect of real and thoughtful experience is often in direct conflict with the expectation with which we had started, and the faith in which we had hoped. The law of love, instead of making itself more vivid and intelligible by its effects, seems to become obscured by its encounter with facts: we looked for examples, we find contradictions; we thought to widen our early principles, we are driven into doubting them.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

With what face then dare I still utter the old watchword of my creed, and recite in this latter and more dismal day the assurance of S. John that God is love? It was to fact, it was to sober and thoughtful experience, not to child dreams, that we professed our readiness to appeal, and how can the appeal be at all sustained?

I. And first, I would summon back some touch of the confidence which has staggered at the repellent array of hostile fact, by recalling once again the history of those first Christians, to whom S. John's phrase sounded as the very key-note of life. Had they who clung to those strong words of his never known what we now know? Had they been held aloof by some kindly Providence from touching our troubles? Had they lived ignorant of the pains and the sorrows with which we now find ourselves encompassed and imperilled? Surely nothing that we see in our day of confusion or dismay exceeds at all the bitterness of which they had knowledge, the fierce fires through which they had to pass—they who found themselves repelled by the world, to which they advanced with such warm welcome, repelled by it with fury, with scorn, with obstinate indignation, cast out by it as the very offscouring of all things, driven hither and thither, misunderstood, distrusted, abhorred, wandering, destitute, afflicted, tormented, in afflictions, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonment, as dying, as chastened, naked, buffeted, reviled, persecuted, defamed, made as the very filth of the earth; they knew all that could be known of disappointment, of terror, of defeat, of contempt. And yet, after all had been tried, after every miserable experience had been endured, they still were as sure as ever that the God and Father who had this world in charge was working all things for good, and that the one verity that deepened and strengthened itself under every trial that the long years had brought upon them, was the undying conviction that in all things God had indeed shown Himself to them to be love.

They found, then, their assurance amid just such conditions as have staggered us; this is the beginning of our confidence in their utterances. Let us now try to see how experience of life can lead to such an unobvious conclusion.

II. And I would ask, whether our dismay has not arisen from our reading the story of life backwards? We started with a delighted gaze upon the outward beauty that first met our wondering eyes; it was by penetrating behind that we fell aback, appalled at the strange revelation. So taken, the loveliness appears as a veil thrown over a dark and ugly background; it is a smile of deceit covering black and crooked designs; we are angry and soured at the apparent lie. But, in entering on any scientific research, we reverse, let us remember, in the process of discovery, the order in which the facts actually stand.

We begin, of necessity, with the last effect, with the immediate phenomenon with which our senses are directly in contact. We advance in knowledge by working back up the long line of causes that issue in this result. This is the essential law of all experimental and scientific discovery: it is a truism to refer to it: and yet it is not altogether so easy to recall how momentous are its bearings upon our final interpretation of life's laws! To discover, we must reverse the order of things; but, if so, to understand things as indeed they are, we must restore the order which discovery reversed. The purpose, the unity, the significance of life, must be sought for, not in that from which it begins, but in that with which it ends. The germ from which all starts, and at which we arrive last in the order of our analysis, discloses its interpretation to us only by means of the very process through which we have passed to arrive at it, and only by restoring to it all its after-effects do we measure its powers, or estimate its worth. The law that is in it stands revealed to us in all that has issued from it; and its final and uttermost result is the fullest and surest witness to its capacities, to its intention. This is the order of reality; and the one pressing test, therefore, the one salient question for us, in examining and estimating the worth of any fact or event, is not how did it begin, but how did it end?

III. Two lessons of hope for our comfort we may briefly note.

If the toiling, struggling life of natural things, within so full of pain and disarray, can yet show itself outwardly to our eyes that range over it, so fair, and harmonious, and tender in its final result, who knows what our human life within, as we see and know it, so noisy, and laborious, and painful, and dark, with ways so dim, and dangers so urgent, and sorrows so frequent, and disasters so despairing—who knows what it may look to the eyes of Him who sees it, whole and completed, from His resting-place in high heaven? How true and gracious an issue it may show to Him who sees it in its result, who knows that towards which it all tends! To that gaze of intelligent and imaginative love it may be displaying a beauty at least as sweet and harmonious as any earthly scene over which we now look out with delight! Into that perfect picture, on which God feasts His eyes, our work too may go to play some part in the orderly array of that wonderful view. Below—to us, within, it may seem dismal and tumultuous as that revelation which science made to us of the hidden secrets of our earthly scenery; but from above, from on high, it may still be seen to accomplish an issue most worthy, and integral, and fair—it may be seen as if asleep in the fulness of peace, as if drowned in the splendour of light and joy and glory. It may be so at this very hour, for out of the very heart of the toil the loveliness emerges.

And then, how strong and good the comfort to us as we push and strive along the darkened roads here on earth, against wind and storm, if we have learned to believe, from the study of the beauty of nature, that it is at the end, and not at the beginning, that love will approve itself to us, will make evident its mastery. Only at the close, only as the issue of all the labour, does the perfect loveliness of nature emerge! So we saw. Towards it all was tending, often was slowly, painfully tending; but there at the last it did appear.

And at the close, too, then, for us the love of God will be made clear. It will wait, wait long in the darkness. Yet for it all is making; towards it all bends; at the last it will make all good. By indescribable shifts, by unforeseen surprises, by sudden rapidities of change, it will turn all to its use, it will work its quick transfiguration. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the spell will be upon us; the blessing will fall, the joy will break out, the kiss will be given, the kiss of a peace in which all sorrow is done away, and all tears forgotten. It will be there, we cannot tell how—only one thing we shall know—we shall know, at that hour of blessed fulfilment, the secret of S. John; for we, too, shall pronounce that the last and uttermost close of all our experiences, sad and broken as the days have been, in the experience that, in the end, God reveals Himself to be entirely and absolutely love. 'Even so, O my God! Men may, at the beginning, set on their best, and afterwards that which is worse. But Thou hast kept Thy good wine until now!'

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

The Divine Love.

God is Love. 1 S. JOHN iv. 8.

I. TWO great words give us the key to the mystery of sorrow, Sin and Redemption. Sin is the key to the misery, redemption tells us God is love. Look first at the fact of sin. I am not going to attempt to explain what no thinker has ever yet been able to explain, the existence of moral evil. Why it was permitted I do not know. Why God who kept some of the angels from falling did not shield all by His restraining grace, I do not know. Why He so created man as to be liable to temptation, and so ordered the constitution of his nature that the whole race are enveloped in the consequences of the first transgression, I do not know, except so far as I can see that freedom is far nobler than an iron necessity, and that through that very solidarity of the race the redemption of the race is possible. But God having given man this freedom, his

most glorious prerogative, and man having so abused it as to turn all God's gifts to base ends, and to rise in base ingratitude against his Maker, that then God should manifest His truth and holiness in His righteous abhorrence of sin, this I can understand. A God who should regard sin with indifference is not a God before whom His creatures can bow in worship, for worship is reverence done to that which is worthy of reverence. 'Bow down before His footstool, for the Lord our God is Holy!' that is an appeal which commends itself to every unprejudiced conscience. Bow down before one who forgives sins, that He may so touch and win back the transgressor, that I can understand; but bow down before one to whom sin is indifferent, that I cannot do. For what is sin? Sin is the will of the creature set against the Creator. Sin is disorder in the realm of order, rebellion in the kingdom of God. And you would make light of this violation of the moral law of the universe? And you would have this disorder, this anarchy, bring no consequences in their train? But how is that possible? 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Is that merely an arbitrary sentence? Is it not rather a moral necessity? Is not suffering inseparable from sin? Either say that God is not the supreme good, or admit that the creature cannot break the bond that unites him to God without cutting himself off from life and happiness. Either say that the soul is not made for God, and degrade it to the level of the beasts that perish, or admit that it loses its higher life, that it suffers therefore and dies by its wilful separation of itself from God. Suffering, immeasurable suffering, is the first-born of sin. You cannot change or abrogate that eternal law, and as long as rebellion exists suffering will follow sin, as the shadow follows the substance, or to speak more correctly suffering must be the offspring of sin. To ask God that it might be otherwise, is to ask Him to cease to be God, to ask Him to sacrifice every moral attribute, it is to ask Him to cease to be the supreme source of life, happiness, and glory.

We pass too lightly over this awful fact of sin. Its heinousness does not make us afraid. If there is a disease in our modern theology and our modern philosophy of life more conspicuous than another, it is this indifference to sin. We lull it with anodynes. We call it anything but sin. We form our schemes of social improvement and material progress without any conviction of this deep plague-spot of our nature. We hide it from ourselves until it breaks out in some scandalous form and startles us with its intensity. We will drill men into morality, or will repress crime by education; we will empty our gaols by philanthropic legislation, but the sin that dwelleth in us is too strong for human remedies, too rampant for the social reformer's pruning-hook. Far truer is the sentiment of the novelist who puts

into the mouth of one of his characters the awful but grand words, 'How gladly would I endure the torments of hell, if thereby I might escape from my sin!'

But granted the moral freedom of man, I say that we have, in the fact of this moral law by which the separation of the creature from the Creator brings with it suffering in its train, a very striking evidence of the love of God. Mark the great blessedness of that first promise in Eden: 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head.' Mark the blessing in the curse pronounced not upon man, but upon the earth: 'Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread.' There was to be the enmity put by God's own hand between the tempted and the tempter, that man might be armed against his enemy by a natural repulsion, there was to be conflict and suffering inflicted in the conflict, there was to be pain of travail for woman, and labour in the sweat of his brow for man. Was it not merciful thus to set a hedge about the sinner's path, and to curb the easiness and laxity of selfish indulgence, and to put a dam to the high tide of selfishness which else had overflowed the world? Was it not love which planted the thorns on the pillow of self-indulgence? Was it not love which gave man the stubbornness of nature to conquer, cheating him thereby of his sorrow? Was it not love which knit and braced his sinews by the life of toil and struggle? There is nothing more puny, do we not all feel it, than the man of pleasure, nothing more contemptible than the life whose supreme end is selfish happiness. Terrible as is the wasting and the plague of sin, with all its burden of pain and suffering, what would have been its horror if left to revel in its triumph? If anything has made life beautiful and glorious, it has been the contest with evil; if anything has restrained the floods of passion, and the march of crime, it has been the efforts and the pain of self-sacrifice. Yes, the aching head and the bleeding heart, the pain that makes life an agony, and the bitter sorrow which bows us to the dust, these are not a tyrant's racks and chains, they are the healing discipline and the crowning mercy of the God whose name is love.

Suffering, I say, is the necessary fruit of sin, and suffering is made in the hand of God the instrument, not of man's destruction, but his salvation.

II. But there is another word which yet more forcibly convinces us that God is love, and that word is Redemption. When the pessimist philosopher of Germany said with blasphemous audacity, 'If God made the world, I should not like to be in the place of God; its woes would break my heart,' he knew not what he said. Its woes have broken the heart of God. Like Caiaphas he uttered an unconscious

prophecy. The woes of the world, I say, have broken the heart of God. Here is the explanation, here, rather let me say, is the light cast on the ways of God in His dealings with men. God hateth sin, and is by the very fact of His righteousness at war with sin, must punish sin. He cannot be holy and look upon sin and goodness with the same supreme indifference. Granted the moral freedom of man, unless you reduce man to the level of a stick or a stone, there must follow the approbation or disapprobation of God, or you have a God not so noble as the purest and noblest of men. Of course, if you choose to take that miserably low view of humanity which makes pleasure the end of life, you will deny this, but then you strike at the root of morality. But if it is good and not happiness which God desires, if it is the good of all, and not the happiness of the unit, if God would place this as the broad visible seal of His sovereignty upon the universe that He is a Holy God, then the wrath of God must be revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men, then misery must be the inevitable recompense of sin.

But how wonderful is that love which takes upon itself the burden and the shame, and the suffering of sin, that thereby it may take it away. This is the mystery and the greatness of the love of God. And you will observe that when S. John speaks of God as love, he immediately proceeds to remind us of the most convincing proof that this is the nature of God, in the fact that He gave His Son to die for us. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

S. John is dwelling on the way in which that love has been manifested to us, on the wonderful proof which we ourselves have that God is love. And this proof is the gift of His Son. 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him.' This is the first stage of the love, that into this world of misery and pain and sorrow, into this world of confusion and sin and death, God sent His only begotten Son, the express image of His Person, the sharer of His glory, that through His Incarnation and humiliation He might put on, and so regenerate and transform our nature, and that we might in Him be made new creatures and live. But S. John adds a further particular. God gave His Son, not only to humiliation, but to death, and He did this not for friends, but for enemies; not for those who loved Him, but for those who had broken His laws and defied His threats and rejected His messages. This is the record of God's love. This is the tale which we have heard so often that we have ceased to fix our thoughts on it. This is the proof of God's love which falls on listless ears, and cold and callous hearts. And in truth, as I have said, it is just because here is the greatest proof of

God's love that none but those who believe in Him can estimate it aright. For if we are to estimate this love aright, we must have felt our need of it, we must know something in our own experience of the condemning power and the guilt of sin. When we have felt within ourselves our own darkness and sinfulness and estrangement from God, when we have seen how our very nature is defiled, when we have found how hopeless are all our efforts to discover a remedy for the mortal disease which has fastened upon us, when we have known what it is to tremble before the wrath of God as revealed from heaven against sin, then we know what a gospel of glad tidings is the revelation which tells us that God gave His only begotten Son, that He might by His precious blood-shedding put away our sin, that He might render to God the perfect and all-atoning sacrifice which should make it possible for God, consistently with His own holiness, to receive and welcome us as His children. Then beneath the Cross of Jesus we believe with all our hearts that God is love. For what would be the hardest sacrifice which ever could be demanded of an earthly parent? Would it not be to give up his child? And would not that sacrifice be still harder if he had to give up his only child, as Abraham gave up Isaac? And would it not add to the hardness of the condition, if he must sacrifice his child, not for some other member of his family or friends, but for his worst enemies, who had slandered, reviled, and persecuted him? And yet more, to make the sacrifice complete, if he must give up that child to a cruel and lingering death? And yet all this God did for us, not obliged to do it, but freely out of His own infinite love, that He might save us from sin and death and hell, and make us partakers of His nature here, and give us everlasting glory hereafter.

Thus, as S. John says, we have seen and known the love that God hath to us. For the only begotten Son hath revealed it. We say that God cannot suffer, that as He is above all the temptations, so He is above all the suffering of earth, and yet in His Son Jesus Christ. He has made all the sufferings and sorrows of the world His own, and God and man are for ever united in the mysterious fellowship of the Cross.

BISHOP PEROWNE.

Steadfast in Charity.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 1 S. JOHN iv. 10, 11.

I. LET us see how this love of the text works in us. Love always desires the presence of the loved; and if there be obstacles, barriers, difficulties that interfere to separate the loving

and the loved, then love, if it have but little power at its command, will try to overleap, or to wade, or in some way to circumvent these barriers. But love, if it have great resources, will take a bolder course, and will remove such barriers. Now see what God has done. God loved us; God loves us; from the beginning He loved us. He made us in order that He might love us; and He loved us beforehand, though He knew how in Adam we should fall, how in ourselves we should lie in the very sloth of sin. But nevertheless this sin is a barrier, a mighty barrier. It had power to stop the course, not only of man's blessedness in Eden, that must seem little when compared with later achievements, it had power to stay the wonder-working hand of Jesus Christ in those who had not faith to be healed. It not only slew the bodies of men, but it could banish from the eternal love of God those who chose to love it rather than God. It not only arrayed the generations of the human race in outward rebellion against their sovereign, but it fortified each individual heart of those millions with a hard impenetrable obstinacy, which made it inaccessible to the love of God. And the love of God, which had gone forth out of itself to delight itself in the world it had made, seemed driven back from earth to heaven, from them to God.

But there in heaven, in God, love triumphed again, and found that which should remove even this great barrier. Love in the councils of the Eternal sent forth the Son to be the Saviour of the world. He, sinless, would draw upon Himself the sin of all the world; He, out of His unspotted and inexhaustible holiness, would offer righteousness which should clothe the whole world, and breathe forth once more that Spirit which is love to enter into the hearts of mankind, and make them desire that righteousness which should make them once more fit for the presence of God. And so love was enabled to look forth once more, to see, not a flood of waters covering the earth and cleansing it by destroying the unclean, but a flood of righteousness cleansing it, by imputing to it and imparting to it the righteousness of Christ and the sanctification of the Spirit.

II. Poets, as you know, have sung that there is a music which they call the music of the spheres, the harmony of all creation even blending through sea and sky, through earth and heaven, the most faultless tones; melody so ravishing that those who heard it once could never rest, must draw ever nearer to it; tones so loud in their mighty vibrations that they fill all space; and yet which we, through our preoccupation, or through our hard chill indifference, never hear. And so it is with this great theme of the love of God, who loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We have heard it all our lives; we are unaffected by it; its utterance flows over the

days and hours of our life like water over the well-worn pebbles of the brook, and yet to one who has even heard but one faint note of that wondrous song, it seems no historic incident of the past, but a fact ever true to his consciousness that it is an angel's voice, an angelic chorus, that tells of that peace and goodwill to men, and the glory of God in the highest, which God wrought out by His love for men in the work of Jesus Christ.

G. C. HARRIS.

Love's all-embracing Activity.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 1 S. JOHN iv. 11.

I. THE man of love becomes a reflex, a mirror of God. 'No man has ever gazed on God' (*τεθέαται*), but 'if we love, God abides within us' (*ἐν ἡμῖν μένει*). They that love Him become instruments for letting the world see what He is. Their self-surrender is no absorption; it gathers into a 'spring of moral energy' within, and leaps back to light a shining stream of sacrifice.

These expressions are but the writing down in other words of S. John's distinct utterances and simple figures. If it is hard to receive them, it is because it is hard to determine on that act of will, and the self-surrender is rare. But there have been lives in the past, we are sure there are hidden lives in the present, lives which have realised that wonderful concluding word, 'God's love has been perfected in them.'

One step onward, and S. John explains that these spiritual facts lie, in the very nature of things, in the nature of God. The 'God who abides in us,' what is He? Not an all-absorbing or an all-pervading self, but an all-imparting self.

'God is beauty,' said the Greek; 'God is strength,' said the Roman; 'God is law,' said the Jew; 'God is love,' says the disciple. That He limited the universe out of Himself, that He redeemed it out of Himself when it willed to stand apart from Him, that He imparts Himself unreservedly to it, and to us (for this He does, if we believe), this in infiniteness, and this in minuteness, is the self-revelation of God.

II. In the midst of the mystery and the awe and the introspection, nothing marks the oneness of our own diverse faculties more than this, that, with a touch which anywhere else we should not hesitate to call humour, S. John puts the test to the value of these lofty ideas, not to dissipate them indeed, but to prove them. In the

pulpit or in the study, in the cathedral or in the oratory, the grand conviction touches many of us. It came to this that the Son of God had for love to lay down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.

Yes, S. John seemed to say, yes; but you will not be much called on to do that when things are settled. You will not be asked for your life; will you then give up something of your living? There is more call for that: all insight and all reverence and heroic resolution (if need were), being assumed to be yours. Whoso hath the world's livelihood (*βίος*) and looks on his brother in want, and locks his compassions out of his reach, how is God's love immanent in him?

The barbed question is followed up by a glowing indignation—called for, it would seem, even in those days of the first love. Ah! 'Little children of mine, do not let us be loving in word, nor even in tongue, but in deed and in truth.'

Not so much theory, not so much even of warm expression, but work, but reality. ARCHBISHOP BENSON.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Power of Memory.

But Abraham said, Son, Remember. S. Luke xvi. 25.

HERE are certain invisible inks—they call them 'sympathetic' inks—with which you can write a sentence, many sentences, as many sentences as there is room for—on a white linen cloth, and yet nothing whatever shall appear to the eye of the observer. The surface is a perfect blank. But hold the cloth or the paper to the warmth of a fire, and every mark that has been made on it—down to the dotting of an 'i' and the crossing of a 't'—stands forth to the view. It was there before, of course, but it required certain conditions to reveal it. And, perhaps, that human faculty which we call memory is of the same retentive kind. Perhaps you and I never really forget anything we do. We seem to forget; but we do not. Every impression in which our moral nature has been concerned, remains stamped upon us. And it needs only a change of circumstances—such as might conceivably occur on our entrance into a future state—to revivify, and make real the various scenes which have taken place in the course of the very longest human life.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

I think you will gather from this introduction what subject I propose to discuss to you. It is 'memory.' And I will take two points of view. First, I will speak about memory as a salutary instrument of moral and spiritual discipline in this world. And then as a terrible instrument of retribution, of deserved penalty, in the world to come. And the exceptional solemnity of the Gospel for the day must be my excuse for the unavoidable gloominess which will characterise the latter part of my discourse.

I. Now, with regard to the first division of our subject we have an obvious illustration of it in the fact of our gathering together for the purpose of worshipping God, and of listening to the preaching of the Word. There may be many reasons—no doubt there are many—for the institution of the Sunday, but certainly among them is this, that we may be continually reminded of the pre-eminent importance of our being prepared for the closer contact with the divine holiness into which we expect to be ushered when the veil is dropped, and we enter into the mysterious kingdom that lies behind it. The pressure exerted upon us by the things of time and sense is a tremendous one; and were it not that we are brought to a stand and made to pause periodically, by an ordinance of God's own appointment, by a day devoted to rest and worship, we should, all of us I fear, be swept before the current, and plunged into a condition of insensate and incurable worldliness. Ill, then, is it with those to whom the Lord's Day is like any other day, or who spend it in careless self-indulgence, for they miss the reminder of eternity which is inseparably connected with it. Well is it with those who use it as God intended it should be used, in such a way, that is, as to keep before them the recollection of being pilgrims here, passing through the wilderness of this world to the land of everlasting rest.

If we would be strong for our work, capable of making progress in divine things; if we would really grasp eternity with a firm hand, and put under our feet the seductions and allurements of the present passing scene, we shall be greatly helped towards so desirable a consummation by keeping our spiritual memories fresh and green, by which I mean frequently recalling to mind both the severity and the goodness of the Lord towards us in the past—His severity in the chastisements which we have incurred by shortcoming and sin, by our folly and perverseness; the goodness, which has pardoned and restored us, and held us up, and brought us thus far in peace and safety on our earthly pilgrimage. Let us then have the wisdom to make of our memory—what it is intended to be—an important auxiliary in the matter of our spiritual progress in this world, lest, peradventure, by our neglect, it prove to be a tormentor to us in the world to come.

II. And this thought brings me to the second division of our subject. The words of our text, 'Son, remember,' were addressed by Abraham to the rich man in Hades, when he complained of the agony he was suffering. There is not much consolation, nor is there meant to be much consolation in them. They mean, This is what you might have expected. This is what you have procured for yourself. The blame lies at your own door and nowhere else. Now, as I have often taken occasion to point out to you, the awfulness of this parable lies very much in the fact that the principal personage in it is by no means what we should be inclined to call a wicked man. No vice, no immorality, no fraudulence, no avowed hostility to religion, nothing of the kind is laid to his charge. He is simply a man of the world, such a one as you have not, I suspect, to go far to look for amongst your friends and acquaintances. He had lived for this life, and this life alone. The future had never really entered into his calculations. And when he passed at death into the mysterious, spiritual, unseen kingdom, he was so totally unprepared for it, so completely out of harmony with it; everything, he found, was so strange, so uncongenial, so repulsive, so revolting to him that he was plunged into a condition of absolute and unutterable misery. This state of things might, of course, have been anticipated (as Abraham tells him), but it was not the less distressing when it came.

Now, it is clear that one element—one chief element—in this man's suffering was the awakening of his memory. You know the strange power which we have of recalling an event—especially a sin—from however great a distance of time, and enacting it over again, fixing it, as it were, before us. Suppose—permit the supposition—that in our younger days we did a thing that was terribly wrong, and which involved consequences, not only to ourselves, but also to others. Well, the circumstance is in the far past. It cannot be altered now. The mischief done cannot be repaired; and perhaps those who suffered by us are by this time out of the reach of any reparation we might wish to make. But have we got rid of the thing? We know that we have not. There are occasions when it rises up like a spectre and haunts us with bitter feelings of shame and regret and self-reproach and remorse, and we would give worlds, if we had them, to undo the thing that we have done. Here we have the formidable power of memory. And, as I understand it, in the case of the rich man in the parable, the vision of the irreparable past (for he was one whose whole life had been one act of indifference to God) rose up before his mind, and stood face to face with him, and refused to depart. He was compelled to dwell upon it perpetually. He might have obtained forgiveness, and he had not. He might have gained fitness for the eternal world, and he had not. He might have loved God, and

he finds now that he recoils from Him. He had had opportunities, and they were allowed to pass by; talents, and they were unimproved. He had been pleaded with by the Spirit of God, and had invariably turned a deaf ear. His soul beats through the weary round—thinking, thinking, thinking of these things, now that it is too late; and, as he is unable to tear himself from the contemplation of them, his memory becomes—who can wonder at it?—a curse to him.

G. CALTHROP.

The Rich Man and the Beggar.

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. S. LUKE xvi. 19-21.

I. ANY rich man might certainly be clothed in purple and fine linen. But for the purposes of a parable, there would be a peculiar fitness in such vestures for a nation which is described in the Scriptures as one of kings and priests. The sumptuous fare may represent the luxury of any individual man. But these words occur in a song, which every Israelite knew by heart, which confessedly referred to the blessings of the race, which gave the form to the thoughts and language of a number of Psalms. 'He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats with the fat of kidneys of wheat: and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.' Evidently, whatever sense we give to the words of this song, the same we may reasonably give to the 'sumptuous fare' of the parable, the only difference being that as our Lord spoke at a time when the nation had lost its civil freedom, the treasures which it possessed must be those which S. Paul enumerated when he said, 'Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.'

II. And if the people who were chosen to know the one God of all the families of the earth, the God who executeth justice and righteousness on the earth, the God who is a Creator and a Redeemer, are represented by the rich man, the beggar at the gate must be the image of those tribes that were bowing to gods who disliked some

families of the earth, to gods who were not just and righteous but spiteful and malicious, to gods some of whom desired to enslave and kill, some of whom were more gracious and merciful, but were controlled by a power higher than all, which seemed at times merely absorbed in its own happiness, at times to be the envious beholder and the destined destroyer of what man loved, of all their momentary gratifications, of all their distant hopes. No mythology, no philosophy had ever been able to cure these speculations, for they came from sores in the conscience, from a sense of inward war, from a prophecy that there must be a Righteous Being, one who desired that men should be righteous, if haply they could feel after Him and find Him. But Lazarus had never been so full of sores—at least the sores had never been so obvious and so painful—as in that age of unbelief, of moral corruption, of eager craving for signs and enchantments, of hopeless slavery, upon which the world, ruled by the Cæsars, had now entered.

III. 'And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.' The beggar lies at the gate of the rich man no more. The blessing to Abraham becomes his blessing. He is carried into the very heart of that divine covenant which was given to one family for the sake of all the families of the earth. Is not this a faithful exhibition of the facts? Heathen nations have believed the God of Abraham to be their God; have confessed Jesus the seed of Abraham to be their Lord and King; have said that He came to adopt them into His Father's family, to make them sons of God in Him. The language is at least consistent with the gospel of the Kingdom of God, as the Apostles proclaimed it to the world.

IV. Does the account of the death and burial of the rich man answer less the facts of history? Does it answer less to the previous passages of S. Luke's narrative? Is not that narrative (or rather the discourses which it records) declaring to us the symptoms of an expiring nation, the nature and source of the diseases which must at last extinguish it? When the sentence went forth against it, what was it but putting into a grave that which had become putrid and was infecting the air?

The nations have been carried into Abraham's bosom. They have become the fortunate brethren of the rich man; the successors to the stewardship which he has forfeited. May not they fall from that honour as he has fallen? Will they not take warning from his fall? Abraham makes answer, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' Moses and the Prophets will tell them what comes

of exulting in great privileges; that men who had the revelation of the righteous God might turn to the vilest idols. Moses and the Prophets will tell them that they can only live by faith in God; that if they once begin to trust in themselves they must perish. He who had Moses and the Prophets, and did not hear them, replies, 'Nay, Father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.' The news of a resurrection; the voice of one who had risen, that must prevail! Is there no conscience in us—in the beggars who have become princes—in the countries of idolaters which now form a Christendom—that responds to the fearful sentence, 'If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' F. D. MAURICE.

The Rich Man and Lazarus.

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores. S. LUKE xvi. 19, 20.

I. IN the last words of Abraham, I conceive to be contained the chief spiritual design of the parable; but there are one or two practical points which ought, perhaps, to receive from us a passing notice first, especially as mistakes about them involve questions of the highest moment to our salvation. Thus I think it very important to observe that we have not before us the entire character either of the rich man or Lazarus. Of the rich man, perhaps, we know the most, because I think the parable assumes that he was cognisant of the distressed condition of Lazarus, but steeled himself against all appeals to his mercifulness, that he might not be disturbed or abridged in what he chose to set apart for his own gratification. Still the parable does not say as much as this; does not say he was cruel or hard-hearted; does not say anything of him, in fact, but that he abounded in the comforts of this life, and that he surrendered himself to their full and unrestrained enjoyment. Now if this were all that could be charged against him, it hardly arises to that measure of guilt which other Scriptures represent as shutting a man out from mercy at the last. What, then, is the necessary inference? Why, that this luxurious, self-indulgent habit of living, is the assumed Scriptural characteristic of an unrenewed, worldly mind; and that, when it is associated with indifference to the suffering that everywhere abounds around us, it is itself a proof that in such manner as the love of God is wanting, the Spirit of Christ does not dwell. In that Epistle of S. John which we read at the same time, it is said,

'He that loveth not, knoweth not God: he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him: hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.' Observe, I have said that a soft, self-indulgent life is a characteristic that indicates a certain alienated moral state; I might have said further, it is an active agent in inducing and conforming a man in that state; for it indisposes to moral obedience, it unfits for sacred exercises, it incapacitates for bearing the cross, it dries up and keeps out the influences of the Spirit of God. The only heaven a luxurious liver can truly pant after is a Mohammedan paradise: and he who can make no room in his heart for a needy and distressed brother, can make no room there for Christ. The rich man was not cast into the place of torment because he was rich, but because he had abused his riches to pride, and selfishness, and worldly-mindedness, and forgetfulness of God. Still more important is it to observe that we have not the whole character of Lazarus. He was poor, he was afflicted, he was neglected and cast off by men; but so have many been who yet when they died found no entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Worldliness of spirit may be as confirmed, and disaffection towards God and holiness as inveterate and deep under an outside of poverty and sores, as under a covering of fine linen and purple. This is a point well worthy of the attention of our poorer brethren. There is a very common reading which many of them have of these words of Abraham and like passages. They think because it says, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented,' that therefore the future world is little more than a place for the reversing of providential lots, for making the poor rich, and the diseased whole, and the afflicted happy; that it is a place for making up to them earth's neglects and deficiencies, and that in exact proportion as they have in their lifetime had a few good things, shall they be enriched and comforted in the life to come. But we learn from this parable, that as it was not because he was rich that Dives was cast into the place of torment, so it was not because he was poor that Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The real state of the heart towards God was the rule applied in both cases; so that if Lazarus had not been patient as well as poor, resigned as well as afflicted, a partaker of the faith and hope of God's children as well as of his chastisement and pains and trials, he would have been as rejected a suitor for a drop of water in the next world as he had been for a few falling crumbs of bread in this; for in Christ Jesus neither riches availeth anything, nor want of riches; but a new creature.

II. But I must proceed to insist a little, in the second place, upon what I assume to be the leading design, the chief spiritual scope, of

the parable we have been considering, namely, to show the inveterate stubbornness of unbelief, and the utter inadequacy of all conceivable means for its removal, where the ordinary appliances of revelation fail. 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' It is not unlikely that many of us, on witnessing in some we love an utter unmovedness, even under the most powerful gospel ministrations, have been disposed to think with this rich man, 'Surely if one were to come to us from the dead, he would repent.' We have here the authority of one who knew what was in man for saying that he would not repent, that a preacher from the dead would not move him any more than a teacher from the living, that he would be as ready with excuses to evade a message from the unseen world, as he is now to elude the application to his own conscience of any sentence from the Word of God.

III. Let us consider some probable forms of evasion men would have recourse to under such circumstances, taking the narrative before us as the basis of illustration.

We will suppose the suit of the rich man granted, and, with the speed of a sunbeam, the spirit of Lazarus has fled back to earth. The father and five brethren are partaking as usual of their sumptuous repast, when all at once the loud laugh is at an end, the song of revelry is hushed, the wine-cup falls unbidden to the ground, as each guest looks on the spectre form of him who, uncared for and unrelieved, had once lain at their brother's gate. The spirit unfolds his message, tells them at whose request he had been sent unto them, relates with thrilling faithfulness the despised groan, the unregarded prayer, the gulf of darkness, and the tormenting flame which is now their departed brother's portion, and which, except they repent, will soon be theirs also. But the spirit departs, and what will follow? Well, there would be a few restless nights, a few uneasy days, some stings of conscience whenever a beggar crossed a path, and an imagination haunted for a time with the shadow of the accusing Lazarus; but the effect would be only for a time; the image would wax fainter every day; and reasons many and cogent would be found why the warning should be dismissed from the mind altogether. For instance, the phantom that had disturbed them might be, after all, only a creature of their imagination, the spawn of a diseased brain, 'an unreal mockery of sights and sounds,' coming upon them when inflamed with wine; or if a real visitation must be allowed, how easy to raise doubts upon the question, whether this messenger had any divine authority. 'If we were quite sure that he were sent of God, and sent at the request of our departed brother to warn us of our awful danger, reason were that we should give heed. But why may not this be a spirit from the world of darkness; Lazarus taking

revenge upon us for his neglected poverty by perplexing us with fears of death, and seeking to poison all our spring of present happiness by an exaggerated picture of future and unreal woe?' Nay, we may go a step further; we may suppose the conviction established in the minds of these brethren beyond all doubt, that it was a real spirit that had been seen; that it was God by whom that spirit was sent; and that such sufferings as he had described their brother to be enduring would be the inevitable consequence of their present worldly and sinful life. Is it then at all more certain that they would repent? Will they not find another loophole yet through which escape may be obtained for their uneasy thoughts? Undoubtedly they would, and through this it might be, if not through any other, that although the spirit had assured them that except they repented such torments would be their portion after death, he had not told them when that death should be; and thus on the promise of an intending repentance would they hush their fears to rest, and procrastination would be the only fruit of the message, though delivered by one who rose from the dead. It would be easy to multiply arguments tending to vindicate the wisdom and mercy of God in not employing the agency of miracle in order to lead men to repentance. It is manifest that all persons could not have the benefit of such agency, unless it were repeated often, and yet if it were repeated often as a means of producing an impression, it would soon come to have no force at all. Indeed, to vindicate the words of Abraham in this passage, it is only necessary to pass from the allegorical to the historical Lazarus, and ask whether people were more ready to believe in Christ when one who had been four days in his grave did rise from the dead. No, unbelief is a disease of the heart. Evidence cannot reach it; miracle cannot reach it; it can be reached only, can be cured only, by the enlightening and transforming power of the Spirit of God, that Spirit which under any and every dispensation can alone lead the mind up to the truth of God, and take the last veil of blindness away. D. MOORE.

Dives and Lazarus.

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. S. LUKE xvi. 19-21.

THE main interest in this parable is its revelation of another world, and its dramatic contrast between the lives of two men here and hereafter; but there are other lessons suggested by it, and

let us take one, the practical lesson of the danger of the neglect of humble duties.

With what a masterly hand the picture is sketched; a few strokes only, but we seem to see both men before us in very life. There is the rich man, influential, popular, with his philanthropic hobbies probably, and his crowd of admiring friends. He goes forth every day to his work, perhaps as a public-spirited citizen, and so each day passed the poor beggar at his gate. We are not told that he was what the world calls a wicked man; indeed, the only fault which is either mentioned or implied is his neglect of this one poor beggar.

In our own lives, how much of the work God gives us to do seems so humble, so uninteresting! We feel within us a capacity for greater things, if only obstacles could be removed, and we could obtain a congenial sphere for work. We see so many openings in the world, and we feel sure our vocation, our mission, should be a great one, and we wait impatiently for an opportunity in some sense worthy of our abilities.

I. Here two temptations assail, two wrong paths offer themselves.

1. To sit down and do nothing, waiting for obstacles to be removed, and so, perhaps, to waste our life.

2. To go out like Dives, and do something to which we are not called, whilst we are neglecting the humble duties of home life.

II. The epitome of this parable is that 'Charity begins at home,' by doing the work which awaits us at our own door. And this is especially the case with women. In this restless age, among the many new questions which confront us is the so-called emancipation of woman, emancipation that is from home life, from what have ever been considered woman's duties. Sometimes this encroachment of woman on the sphere of man's work is an economical necessity, almost always it is a social calamity!

The strength of a nation is its homes; the centre and magnet of the home is the woman. REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

Hearing Moses and the Prophets.

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. S. LUKE xvi. 31.

DIVES was a man who rolled his easy life along a path softly strewn with this world's luxuries. Very near him, but, perhaps, unknown to him, there lived every day Lazarus, an afflicted child of God, one full of sorrows, 'longing for the crumbs

which fell from the rich man's table, and the dogs came and licked his sores.'

There is no reason to say positively that Dives ever knew—at least in their extent—of the existence of Lazarus or his afflictions. But if it were ignorance, it was a responsible ignorance. A man ought to know the wants and the sorrows which have been thrown within his sphere. You may go your daily round of comforts, and you may choose to know nothing but in the abstract of the ignorance and the wretchedness which make the sum of the realities of the world in which you live. They may lie beside your way, and come well-nigh under the shadow of your roof, and you see them not. But be assured of this, that in the great day of reckoning, we shall be held responsible for the love which we might have loved, for the sufferings which we might have known, for the wound which we might have healed. It is not only the Levite, who looks on the wounded man and passes by, but the priest too, who, because he would not look, passed by on the other side, who is guilty before God.

A little while, however, and another world—a world of retribution—has reversed the picture, and righted the anomalies of this present scene. Lazarus, who found no sympathy, now lies in the bosom of Abraham. Dives's pampered body is parched and fevered with the burning flame: he, who never gave a crumb, is now ready to give all worlds for a drop!

I. But two great principles prevented. The one is the strictness of compensating justice. Lazarus used well his poverty. Dives used ill his wealth. 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

The other principle was God's absolute sovereign arrangement, the exact contrast of the state we have now, where the passage from woe to happiness, and the passage from happiness to woe, is always the easiest. 'But beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.'

But now what shall we say of that which follows? Is there love in hell? Do the spirits of the lost remember still those whom they have left behind? And can they feel indeed an interest about their spiritual welfare? Or, are they words which do not bear upon the great point of the parable, and of which, therefore, we are not to look for any parallel in the things of life? Or, was it a mere selfishness still, that he might escape his brothers' reproaches, when they should come to upbraid him for his bad example, that Dives said, 'I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I

have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'

I incline to think that if we are to apply the words to ourselves at all, they convey to us this fact, that in that wretched world there may spring up desires, good desires, but that it will be too late. For ever and for ever those desires may live, but never to be gratified. And who shall say what an amount of torment might lie in an eternity of impotent and unsatisfied longings? I can conceive of nothing more horrible than to have continually aspirations after something good, yet all the while the consciousness that that good, after which we aspire, is a thing utterly and eternally impossible.

Abraham, knowing God's method of grace, says, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' Dives, knowing neither God nor the heart (for no one really knows the heart, not even his own heart, till he knows God), pleads, 'Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said unto him, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.'

II. Now, to gather clearly the force of these words, you must carry in your minds that 'Moses and the prophets' comprised the whole Bible, as it then existed, for the canon of the New Testament was not then formed. It is the same as if he had said, 'If they do not believe the Bible, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' But yet we must not forget that in the Law, and especially in those prophets, Jesus was contained, so that they had all that was necessary to evangelical faith, and true salvation, only, as our Bible in its perfected state sets forth the way of peace much more clearly, the argument, whatever it may be, must apply with a hundredfold force to us.

And now, what is the argument? First, it is the great general truth, that every man has provided for him, and within his grasp, all that is necessary for his salvation. It is certain that we are all of us often disposed to speculate, and to indulge fancies, and even to judge and practically to blame God in this matter. We think, 'If God had but dealt with me as I have seen Him deal with other persons, how much more religious I should have been than I am now.' Perhaps we think, 'If I had been as much prospered as another;' or perhaps, 'If I had had the same afflictions as another,' or it may be, 'If my gifts had been like that man's!' For when once we begin to find excuses in Providence, it is impossible to say where we shall stop, or how wickedly ingenious the mind will become. 'If only things were a little different from what they are, how easy and how sure it would have been that I should have loved God!'

Then, in like manner, some are often idly dreaming: 'If God

would only do some great thing, if I could behold an angel, if I saw a hand, if I heard a voice, if I had some evidence like that, if God would give me some wonderful answer to prayer, how surely I should be converted!' The fact is, that many are actually waiting at this moment for some such thing as that! They are expecting some further marvellous influence which will some day or other be exercised upon their minds, and then, when that wonderful influence comes, they look to be thoroughly changed by this great interposition which God will make on their behalf, that their will shall be constrained, and their whole soul changed as by a miracle; and so they let the present opportunity pass by unimproved, looking only for some great thing to happen to them; whereas, for all this, there is no warrant in the Bible. I believe that every one of us has, at this moment, enough, quite enough, to save him; nay, I believe, that every one of us is, at this moment, in the most favourable position in which he can possibly be placed for his salvation, and that if circumstances were changed, he would be in a less advantageous condition. For does not the Spirit draw you now? Is not the truth that you now know larger than the truth you obey, and, therefore, is not it all that you, at this moment, could bear? Are you not painfully conscious that if you would but act out the convictions given you, you would soon become a better man? Are not you perfectly aware that every good gift we have would increase if only we exercised it? It is a very ignorant and foolish thought which those have who think that outward circumstances can do much for the soul of man! The worst circumstances cannot really hinder you, and the best cannot truly improve you!

Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, was raised from the dead; when the Jews saw it, it only hardened them into a more deadly opposition.

Samuel rose from the dead to counsel Saul; but the king's mind remained unchanged, afraid, but unhumbled; mortified, but impenitent; and he rushed to the awful act of suicide.

And when Jesus stood really and palpably risen, did it convert one heart? The world strove to frustrate it; and of the Church, 'some believed, and some believed not.'

No, there is nothing but grace, sovereign, omnipotent grace, that can ever touch a man's heart. A miracle, without grace, can do nothing; and grace, without a miracle, can do everything.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Angel appearing to Joshua.

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. JOSHUA v. 13, 14.

F it appeared strange to any one, that the Lord should contend with Jacob, let him remember that He who wrestled against Jacob, at Jabbok, is the same who fought, openly fought, for Israel at Jericho.

And lo, men seem sometimes to be against us in life's dark passages; but oh, how far more, in the hours of real danger and trouble will He stand up for us, as with a sword drawn in His hand, our champion and defender.

When Israel set out on their way to go through the wilderness, this was the Lord's undertaking: 'Mine angel shall go before thee, and bring thee unto the Amorites, and the Hittites and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.' And now, standing within the borders of that land, as soon as ever they have entered it, that angel is seen by them again; as though he said, 'I have fulfilled all my words: though thou sawest me not, it was I that have brought thee all the way hitherto; and here I renew my promise this day; what I have been in the desert, that I will be in Canaan—thy leader and thy king.'

And who was He, who thus, at every point, met and anticipated His people's wants—the Alpha and Omega of the way?

A man, the history expressly declares, a man; and yet to that man Joshua paid divine honours. He fell on his face to the earth, and he did worship, and said unto him, 'What saith my lord unto his servant?' And the man made answer, in the very words which God in His august presence used to Moses in the bush, 'Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.'

Who, then, was this worshipped man, equal with God, and Israel's captain?

S. Paul shall answer: 'But we see Jesus, who was made a

little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain' (mark these words) 'the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.'

Do you hesitate? Do you say, 'Is captain a title and a name suitable to give the Almighty Lord?' Hear Abijah's true and noble words, 'Behold, God Himself is with us for our captain!'

Where, then, will you rest, but in the conviction that we have here another gleam of those great advents of Christ, which have been since that time, and shall be yet brighter and brighter still, upon this earth, down to the end of all things.

Joshua, who had very lately succeeded to the command of the host, had just marched his army to the foot of that close valley which leads up from Jordan to Jerusalem. At the entrance of the defile stood Jericho, a strong city, as one of the royal cities: strictly fortified, and the key of the surrounding country.

The history conveys to us the idea that Joshua had gone out, as with a general's eye, to reconnoitre the place. 'And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes'—either at that moment he was looking down, as we are wont to do, in meditation, or, as I think more likely, the form he beheld was at some unusual height above him—'he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand.'

It is almost clear that Joshua was by himself when this interview took place; and I notice that on all the four occasions which we are now considering, the person to whom Christ appeared was at first alone.

We should probably have expected that it would be so. There is a dignity in solitude worthy of the occasion. Never be afraid of solitude. It is the test of a man—how he regards solitude. The highest converse is in solitude.

Surely there is a lesson here, not inappropriate to the present times, in the fact that Christ appeared to Joshua—to use the strong language as applied afterwards to God Himself—as 'a man of war.'

Would that image have ever been used, would Christ have assumed that form, if all war were out of question?

And may not this thought be a comfort to any Christian man who is taking upon him in any degree the profession of a soldier, that his Lord and Master has been seen in that very garb which he is wearing? Will he not go more happily and more fearlessly on his way? Will not his arm be nerved, and his heart braced by the thought

of the link, which thus unites his military life, in some shadow of resemblance to one of the great advents of his Saviour?

And let him not forget that if war finds here a justification and nobility, so also here it has its test and its boundary line. That fighting, and that fighting only, is right, in which a man's conscience bears him witness that he believes that Christ, were He to appear at this moment upon the earth, would sanction that engagement by fighting at his side!

But it is still more important to all of us to remark how strikingly the manifestations of Christ accommodate themselves to the various circumstances of His people.

To Abraham, a wanderer and sojourner in Canaan, He manifests himself as a wayfaring man.

To Jacob, on the eve of an expected conflict with his brother, Christ showed Himself as a comforter.

To Joshua, a soldier and an officer, Christ too is a soldier in command.

And we may extend that line of thought almost boundlessly; for He is a man to men and a brother to us all; and every relationship of life may find Christ in sympathy with it.

Take this truth then very practically. At that moment the minds of Joshua and of the people were entirely occupied with the war which was before them: and exactly set to that engrossing idea was the manifestation that Christ made. Any other would have been comparatively inopportune.

So, whatever fills your thoughts, whatever position you may stand in, being a Christian, you may find the closest adaptation somewhere to it in the attribute, or the work, or the promises, or the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. Realise something in Christ's mind parallel with your mind. See Him with the eye of faith, able as willing, and willing as able, to place Himself at your point: to look with your eye: to feel with your pulse; to act with your actings: accurately supplying the miserable deficiencies of that position in which you find yourself, and of which you are so wretchedly conscious.

A general grace is a good thing, but it is detail, it is individuality which carries power with it. It wants a reality to carry importance and comfort. Therefore, whatever is the very character which you would wish Christ to be to you at any moment, use your privilege of that free 'I am': God has put it into your hand to fill up the blank as you will; and fill it in in that exact character, and believe in that character Christ at that moment appears to you.

Into the large field of Christ's conflicts and Christ's victories for His Church, how He Himself has borne the brunt of the battle, and

the burden of the day; and how, having carried His banner of love high unto the end, He has unfurled it now, and sent it back to guard us through the fight, and assure us all the day of the issue of the evening, it would be too long for us now to enter,—that belongs to another occasion. I shall keep close to the vision under the walls of Jericho.

When Joshua, then, first saw the Lord there was nothing, it appears, in His aspect to denote certainly whose cause He was come to espouse. And Joshua went unto Him and said unto Him, Art thou for us or for our adversaries? And then Christ revealed Himself more fully: 'Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.'

Take one comforting assurance. If sometimes you are in doubt, as you will be, concerning certain appearances in providence and in grace, whether God is for you, or whether God is against you in that matter; and if your desire is strong, then, for His help and favour, you may rest with a tolerable conviction that in that matter God is for you. That manifestation and that desire would not have concurred together if it were not so; and the very question of your mind has an expectancy in it; that expectancy has a faith in it; and that faith commands its own answer.

Immediately that Christ and Joshua now stood together in their recognised character, Christ of course went into the ascendency, and Joshua went down into the dust. Man, high as he was, was superseded, and the Lord, the great Captain, is all in all—directing, planning, and ruling.

The beginning of the next chapter is clearly, as I can conceive, to be taken as unbrokenly one with the passage which we have now before us; and the command given to Joshua respecting the capture of Jericho is part of the communication of which my text is the beginning.

Joshua stood before the heavenly Captain with the shoes from off his feet, to receive orders about the conducting of the siege.

So let it be with us all. As soon as ever a providence, a word, a will of God, shows the special presence of Deity, let it go into its supremacy, and every human authority, however high, stand humble in the posture of silent obedience.

Very pleasant it is to let the King of kings go up on His throne, and speak alone, and take at once all the responsibility and all the rule.

And now, what were the great Commander's instructions? How did He lay out the day? Mark it well. Patience—the sevenfold compassings of faith—music; and the barriers fall, the way is clear, the work is achieved.

And so He who knows best disposed the fight.

Oh that we often adopted those heaven-taught measures! A quiet sustained waiting on the Lord, a going around and around our object with perseverance ever strong in the thought that it carries with it the promise. And above all, the voice of joy which ere the boon is given pleads with very confidence as if the boon were already come.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Religious Prudence and Religious Courage.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain. ECCLESIASTES xii. 1, 2.

THE few following verses of the chapter go on to describe the desolate, weary, joyless state of man when the pleasures of life are past and yet death is delayed. There are at least two explanations of them; the older and more general one, that they are a description of the gradual weakening of the human body in all its parts, that 'the almond-tree shall flourish and the grasshopper shall be a burden' is said of the grey-headed man, scarcely able to support his own shrunken body; and in the same way that the golden bowl, and the silver cord, and the broken wheel, and the shattered cistern are figures for different parts of the body, such as the head or the heart, whereon the issues of life mainly depend, each become useless, and ready to be dissolved. And others think that the failing body is described as a city when a storm has come on it, when the keepers of the houses leave the doors and go inside, and the women that look out of the windows are frightened away, and the singers and the feasters forget their pleasures, and everything out of doors is neglected and left to ruin. It makes little difference which of these explanations is the better one; either enables us to enter into Solomon's general meaning, which is indicated by the first two verses of the chapter, if we connect them with verse seven, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.'

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

All the books, both of the New Testament and the Old, may be said to have been written in faith and by faith. But we might use different words to describe the faith of the different saints and prophets who wrote them, or whose deeds are told there; if we should say that Moses had a self-sacrificing faith, Isaiah an expectant faith, Jeremiah a sustaining faith, Daniel a consoling faith, we might express some special truth as to the writings and spirit of each, as well as the true faith in God which is common to all. And if we thus distinguish the kinds of faith wherein the books of Scripture are written, we might say that this book of the preacher was written with a daringly honest faith, a faith that would look facts in the face, and see God in or behind those very things which serve to hide Him from most others. The natural facts that Solomon speaks of in these two chapters are facts plain to any man even without faith.

There is a time when life is pleasant, there is a time when life is dull and dreary. The pleasures of a young man's life, and the troubles of sickness and failing strength, are realities, every one knows that, but it is not every one who in the days of his youth sees a warning to remember his Creator and his Judge, and in the approach of death a recall of the spirit to God who gave it; or who feels that these things unseen, Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, are as real as the sickness and health, youth and age, which we all see and know, and are infinitely more important.

I. And first of all, Solomon says boldly that this world, this life, is good and pleasant, parts of this life very pleasant indeed, and meant to be enjoyed. 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun;' 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes.' Solomon, I say, had a daring faith; he was not afraid to say that the world was sweet; that all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is very attractive to man; that not only all the trees of Eden, of which man may freely eat, but the Tree of Knowledge itself, is pleasant to the eyes, and good for food, and a tree to be desired to make one feel wise. Many of Solomon's readers who had faith, but not a strong faith, have refused to believe that Solomon meant what he said; they have tried to make his words mean, 'Rejoice at your peril, rejoice if ye can, with the thought of judgment behind.' But Solomon was a man who would not, as Job says, speak deceitfully for God or accept his person; he would say what was true, whether the consequences seemed to strengthen faith or weaken it.

But he knew all the time that faith must be strengthened by all truth; that every single truth agrees with every other, while 'no lie

is of the truth,' and no lie can serve the truth. The world is good, good because God made it; but for us to live for this world only is not good, because this world will pass away, and we shall not, but shall have to be judged. 'God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions'; if man were upright still, he could enjoy the world without fear of God's judgment; now he must enjoy the world with fear of God's judgment, if he will enjoy it at all.

II. But, loth as men are to listen to some parts of our Lord's teaching, they seem still more unwilling to listen to Solomon's, which seems easier and pleasanter. That it is right to remember death and judgment, to fear God and prepare to meet Him, we all know and believe; but that it is possible to fear God and to be happy, to remember the judgment and enjoy life, we will not believe at all. That faith in God is a comfort in sorrow, the fear of God a protection for the end of life, people are ready to admit; but for a young man, a happy man, a man in good health to be godly, seems unnatural and almost impossible. The days of a man's youth, the good days, the days that he has pleasure in, these we take it for granted that he will rejoice in as Solomon bids him; he will walk in the ways of his own heart, and in the sight of his eyes; and how can he, we think, remember his Creator, or think that for all these things God will bring him into judgment? Afterwards, when the evil days come, will be the time for these things: when the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars are darkened, we will call upon Him who maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades; we will trust in Him whose throne shall stand evermore as the moon, and as the faithful witness in heaven; when the clouds return after the rain we will seek for the refuge from the storm, and try to hide ourselves in the Rock of Ages; but now, while the world is pleasant, what can we expect of any one but to live for the world and set his heart upon the world?

But the men of this world are not only very wise men; they are very brave men too. They will say, 'Threaten us as much as you please with sudden death or with hell-fire; we are not to be frightened by such brute terrors from doing what is right in our own eyes. We know that life was given us to enjoy, and we will enjoy it in our own way, not in Solomon's, without the thought of God or of judgment. If God chooses to judge us and to damn us He can and He may; but we will not go out of our way for the fear of Him, nor admit that His judgment is just. 'Let Him make speed and hasten His work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One draw nigh and come, that we may know it.'

Truly these men are very brave indeed who are afraid neither of death nor of hell. And Solomon was not, that we know of, a

particularly brave man; he was at any rate a man of peace. There was, however, a descendant of Solomon's who feared death and judgment very sorely, and he, though not so great a philosopher as Solomon, was both a better ruler and a better soldier. When he thought death was near him, he says, 'Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward; O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.' Yet Hezekiah was a brave enough man at other times: 'He rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not; he smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchman unto the fenced city'; and one might wonder whether it be indeed such a proof of courage not to fear him who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell, when we see how men feared him who cared very little for any other fear. One would almost wonder whether these wise men are very brave or very cowardly; whether it is that they have, as they say, no fear of hell itself, or whether they are so afraid of the very name of hell that they cry out if any one mentions it, and try to forget that there is any such place in God's creation, because they have not the courage, as Solomon had, to look facts in the face, and give diligence that they may be delivered from the adversary.

But, however, let us meet these high-spirited people on their own ground: if they glory after the flesh, we will glory also. We will say nothing of what we have either to hope or to fear—we will put it all as a matter of spirit and generosity. Is this worthy of a man, to give to God the part of life which is useless to self, useless to the world, useless for any other purpose whatever, too worthless for any one else to accept? Wait till the days when thou shalt say, 'I have no pleasure in them,' and then see whether thy Creator will take pleasure in thee, such as then thou art. We will take it for granted that all things go as the man would have it, that he lives till the age he reckons on, that he recognises in time the signs that the end of life is near, and that he has enough power over his will and affections to shake off the habits of a lifetime and prepare at the end of life to meet his God, after having studied to forget Him until then. Then, no doubt, the man who has done this has made sure of happiness. Not indeed upon earth, for what sorrow, what penitence will be enough for the time that he has wasted? He has lived until now, if not in actual gross sin, at any rate in forgetfulness of God; now he turns to God, and mourns for the errors of his life past—how can he ever, in this short time, mourn enough? And what comfort has he in his sorrow? Some have grown up in God's grace steadily from their baptism, have wept much for sins that you or I should never have dreamed of noticing, but have never felt themselves cut off from God by their own actions; and thus their whole life has been a fulfilment

of that promise, 'Thou shalt give them drink of Thy pleasures as out of the river.' And if any have sinned for a short time and been converted soon, then, though repentance is always hard, it is not so very hard to these.

III. But we have spoken even yet of a man's selfish happiness, when we had promised to speak of honour and generosity. And how mean is this, how unworthy to offer to God the very least of our life that will suffice for our own final salvation, when we have used all the best of it ourselves without giving him a share, or consulting Him in its use? It is easy to see for ourselves how dishonourable it is thus to offer to God the blind and lame and sick, instead of the healthy and vigorous part of our lives; yet we may feel it the more if we compare that which we sacrifice to God with what God sacrificed for us. What He gave up indeed in coming down from heaven, we cannot possibly measure or understand; but look at His life after He was made man, and there learn what is a true generous devotion of the best of self. Look at Him who was born in a stable on a winter night, that there might be no moment kept back from the work He had to do, that He might begin to suffer from the first, who worked unknown and unhonoured for thirty years, a poor man's son and a poor man Himself, that He might know all the petty worrying cares of everyday life, as well as the great sufferings that it is noble and heroic to endure; and who died at thirty-three, when the powers of mind and body are at their best, when life is most worth having, when the sense of happiness is not yet blunted, while the soul is already thoughtful enough to feel misery keenly. He rejoiced, no doubt, in his youth; if He had not the glory of Solomon about Him, He was content to consider the lilies how they grow, and find more glorious array in them. If He found no comfort of the flesh from the visible things around Him, He yet rejoiced in spirit to see how His Father had revealed the things of His Kingdom unto babes, as seemed good in His sight; and thus His heart cheered Him in the days of His youth, however little cheerfulness He had besides. Yet He had very little time to take His pleasure in. The evil days came on Him very soon—days that He had no pleasure in, but when His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; when the sun and the light was darkened, not in the heaven only, but in His soul, as He cried, 'My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Indeed, He gives us more time to be happy in than He had Himself. I will not ask, are we not ashamed to take what He allows us? but I will say, are we not ashamed to refuse to give Him the best we can? Is His perfect life, His early death, a thing to be repaid with the shortest, latest, poorest days that we count it enough to offer Him?

G. H. SIMCOX.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Church's Mission.

Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. S. MATT. xxviii. 19.

IN the text a motive for missionary work quite remote from that of fear is brought before us—the great truth of the catholicity of the Church. In these words: 'Go and teach all nations,' the risen Saviour gives us the charter of missionary work. He reveals that mystery which Christians were only slowly able to comprehend, and which filled the heart of S. Paul with such thankful joy: the mystery of the Church's catholicity—the truth, so long unrevealed, that God embraced all mankind in His purpose of grace, that His good pleasure was to make the Gentiles fellow-heirs with the chosen people, of the same body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus. Let us consider what is involved in the doctrine of the Church's catholicity.

I. First, then, the Church is the divinely-appointed home of mankind. The earliest sense of the word Catholic implies the idea of extension. God will have all men to be saved; He bids the Church make disciples in all the world. It follows that the Church of God is in all the world, and is intended to embrace men of every age, nation, and clime. It is catholic, universal, as to time, space, and nationality. 'The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge' the one name by which we must be saved, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The primary sense of the word Catholic is thus that of extension, or universal diffusion.

As we meditate on the great charter of the Church we are able to recognise what lies behind it.

1. There is the 'eternal purpose of God': His purpose 'to gather together in one all things in Christ.' The whole universe of things material and spiritual is involved in this purpose. The end of the world is a *συντελεία τῶν αἰώνων*—a 'joint contribution' of all the ages to God's completed work. And the race of man is concerned in this divine purpose. In all the world the eye of faith watches the operation—the attracting power of the invincible will of God. The 'true worshippers' are being gathered together wherever the voice of the Church is heard; in her the Father manifests Himself as 'seeking' such to worship Him. And here is an inspiring motive of missionary zeal: it is the good pleasure of God to gather in all that every race or nation can supply towards the perfecting, or strengthening, or adorning of the temple of His Church. We ought to feel the enthusiasm of builders who are required to find a place in the

temple for every jewel and stone of price, that every race and every age can produce. The real ground of missionary zeal is not only anxiety for the furtherance of God's sovereign will, but also a real readiness to enter delightedly into the magnificence of His thoughts. 'How dear are Thy counsels unto me, O God; O how great is the sum of them.' 'They that are far off,' says the prophet, 'shall come and build in the temple of the Lord.'

2. Again, behind the charter of the Church is the kingly claim of the risen Christ. 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore.' 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men'—all things, as the Latin version says—'unto Me.' 'All things are delivered unto Me of my Father.' In giving His great commission, Jesus enters on the possession of that which was given to Him at His Incarnation. 'Desire of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Thus the Church exults in the kingly reign and claim of her Lord. She is the organ of His sovereignty. The Cross in her hand is the standard of the King of kings.

And observe that this kingly claim on man is the warrant of his true dignity. This is the true end of his being: to reign with Christ as one in whom Christ reigns; to be like one of those heavenly thrones, of which S. Bernard says, 'they stand as thrones, because God is enthroned on them'; to serve the divine will, and in serving to find freedom and perfect peace; to fulfil the perfect ideal of creaturely life: *subjectio Dei requietio aeterna.*

3. Once more, there is involved in the catholic idea the ministry of the Holy Spirit. 'Go ye, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them.' Here is implied the operation of the living Spirit, for 'by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free' (1 Cor. xii. 13). The Spirit in His power works in and through the living body: *Ubi ecclesia, ibi Spiritus Dei; ubi Spiritus Dei, illic ecclesia et omnis gratia* (Iren. iii. 24, 1.); yet in His unfettered freedom He has a way of working beyond our ken. 'The Spirit bloweth where it listeth.' Whatever stir or movement there is in the dim heathen world, whatever blind outstretching of hands towards light and love, there the Spirit is at work drawing men towards the Eternal Son.

And thus the Church has confidence in her world-wide mission. She is catholic: she looks out on the world with a heart that yearns in sympathy with the heart of God. In proportion as we try to be faithful to the Church's mind, missions will attract more of our interest, our sympathy, our co-operation. It is the great purpose of God to build up a holy city, 'the city which hath the foundations.' We too often think of missionary work exclusively as a work of

destruction, an overthrowing of strongholds of sin and Satan. Certainly it is not wise to forget this stern aspect of the cause of our Lord. He is come—He cometh—conquering and to conquer. But on the ruin-heaps of an old and outworn world it is His plan to build up Jerusalem. On this He has set His heart. This city it is that needs material from the whole quarry of human nature. Mission work is a great constructive enterprise in which we, whether as a Church or as individuals, are called to bear our part. The book of Revelation teaches us that the perfecting of this city is 'the end of the ways of God.'

II. Again, the Church is catholic because she is the 'teacher of all truth.' 'The Catholic Church,' says S. Cyril of Jerusalem, 'is so called (1) because it exists in every part of the world from one end to the other; (2) because it teaches generally (καθολικῶς) and without omission all truths that ought to come to the knowledge of men, touching things visible and invisible, earthly and heavenly; (3) because it subjects all classes of men to the rule of godliness; (4) because it heals generally (καθολικῶς) every kind of sin whether spiritual or bodily, and possesses every kind of virtue which can be named.' Here we see a tendency to read into the word 'catholic' more, possibly, than strict usage will warrant. But at least to the primary idea of extension is added that of doctrinal completeness. The Church is catholic as teaching (to use some words of Mr. Keble) 'the whole of that truth by the knowledge whereof God would have all men to be saved.'

III. Once more, the Church is catholic in relation to individual growth in grace—she is the giver and teacher of spiritual breath, of a catholic spirit.

Loyalty to the mind of the Church, submission to her discipline, has been too often supposed to lead necessarily to cramped and petty views of human things. Certainly this need not be so. To be a son of the Catholic Church means that a man has a sense of the infinitude, the many-sidedness of truth; while he is a faithful, loyal, and jealous guardian of the transmitted heritage, he will yet be 'penetrated' (as has been nobly said) 'by the greatness of what he supports and the greatness of what he opposes.' A Christian teacher or student will value and cherish the inherited rule of truth, and yet his utterances will be so far reserved, fragmentary, and incomplete, as they correspond to the infinite mystery before him. There was in Jesus Christ what men could see, touch, and handle; but there was also more than they could fathom or measure; in the presence of His unveiled glory they were as men who stammered, scarce knowing what they said. That deep sense of insufficiency has never been absent from the mind of great catholic teachers. Even their most fearless and

subtle dogmatic statements were, so to speak, forced from them, and were pronounced with many apologies and qualifying cautions. Reverence is ever, so far as is compatible with fidelity, reserved and slow of speech.

And, again, to be a Catholic is to have a sense of the largeness of our heritage. As the Apostle says, 'All things are yours.' The Spirit of God claims and appropriates all the material that human life and human intellect and human activity can supply. To the son of the Church nothing can be without its interest and significance, as throwing light on man and his destiny, and on the ways of God. It is the great claim of the Christian that 'the spiritual man judgeth all things, but he himself is judged of no man.' With the Catholic creed in our hearts and hands we ought to look out on the world of nature and humanity with eyes that penetrate deeper than the surface of life.

Yes; we hold in our hands the clew to this tangled maze; the kingdoms of this world are on the way to become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ.

And, once more, to be a Catholic Christian is to be filled with a sense of the inexhaustible significance of our creed. We find in our faith, more deeply understood, that which will best meet the wants of every age. To be catholic-hearted is to be large-hearted. The Christian is not merely a student of the past, he is one who studies the present—who devotes himself to understanding his age, who asks God for light to see what knowledge is most serviceable for the age in which he lives, what is the message which his age chiefly needs to receive and learn. And, conversely, each age, each experience of life, each new set of circumstances, each sorrow, or shock, or achievement, has within it the power of interpreting to us more clearly the language of our Bible and the clauses of our creed. We learn to look at all things, and judge of all things, in the growing light of a larger insight into the things of faith.

In S. Paul we see the right temper and spirit of a true son of the Catholic Church. We see fervent zeal for the cause of Jesus Christ and the extension of His kingdom combined with the truest largeness of heart; here, at least, is one who is not cramped or narrowed by his faith—one who is conspicuous among his fellows for the width and intensity of his sympathies. 'I have no man like-minded; for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.' Is not this a temper of mind which comes from noble thoughts of the Church, as embodying the largeness of the divine plan, reflecting the comprehensiveness of the divine thoughts, imparting the fulness of the divine spirit? The Church is broad, because, as Bishop Ken beautifully says, she is 'the catholic seminary of divine love'; nay,

because He is in the midst of her of whom it is said, 'The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams.' 'He,' the soul may surely say, 'He hath brought me forth into a place of liberty, even because He had a favour unto me.' 'Thou hast not,' the penitent may cry, 'Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy, but hast set my feet in a large room.' May God give to His servants more and more 'largeness of heart,' exceeding much!

R. L. OTTLEY.

Ripeness for Heaven.

Immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. S. MARK iv. 29.

THIS is a parable which all of us can understand. It is a comparison of the growth of corn in the field to the growth of grace in the heart.

I. 'The growth.'

The seed sown in the field grows up—

(1) 'Unaccountably.'

The seed is cast into the ground; and the sower goes his way; and the seed he has sown springs up and groweth, 'he knoweth not how.' The most acute philosopher knoweth not how the grain vegetates. That the corn should die before it springs up, and then so change its appearance, is a mystery which no one can explain. The sower sows the seed. He sees that it has grown; but in what manner it has grown he cannot tell you.

So is every one who is born of the Spirit. We know not how the Holy Spirit by the word makes a change in the heart, any more than we can account for the wind which bloweth where it listeth. We can hear the sound of the wind, but we cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.

In this we see God's sovereignty. The preaching of the word is the great instrument of conversion; but not all who hear the word are converted by the word. When they hear the word preached, some believe and some believe not. As many as are ordained to eternal life believe. To this the Apostle James refers, where he says, 'Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth.' To this the Apostle Peter also refers, where he tells us that believers are 'born again of incorruptible seed, even by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.'

And those that are thus begotten again by the word cannot tell you how it was the word was so blessed to their souls. All they can say is, 'My conversion is unaccountable, I cannot explain it. The

Lord Jesus made me willing in the day of His power. One thing I know, once I was blind, now I see. The sower sowed the word, and that seed sprang up, but I know not how. It was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes.'

Another thing the Lord Jesus here says concerning the seed sown in the field. It grows—

(2) 'Of its own accord.'

'The earth,' He adds, 'bringeth forth fruit of herself.' The husbandman, when he has sown the seed, does nothing towards its springing up. He composes himself to sleep at night. He gets up in the morning; and perhaps for weeks together does not think of the corn he has been planting. Nor does he even go to see it; but follows his own occupations or pleasures; and yet the earth brings forth fruit 'of itself,' according to the ordinary course of nature, and by the concurring power of the God of nature.

Thus is it with God's Word. The preacher cannot make it grow. He can contribute nothing towards its growth. The Spirit of God carries on the work, while the minister perhaps has forgotten all that he said. There is a principle of life in the corn which causes it to vegetate. Nor is it indebted to anything but the kindly influences of the heavens. Faithful preachers sow the good seed of the kingdom, and use the other appointed means of securing success, yet God alone gives the increase. The seed must spring up, of itself, spontaneously, through God's blessing. No human teaching can make the natural man receive the things of the Spirit; yet God's Word never returns to Him void. It ever accomplishes the object for which He sent it. It must spring up, and bring forth fruit.

How the seed sown brings forth fruit will appear from my next remark, which is that the seed grows not only unaccountably, and of its own accord, but also—

(3) 'Gradually.'

Seed does not instantly spring up in a state fit for the sickle. It passes through many different stages before it arrives at maturity. There is first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. When it has sprung up it will have its course. It will go forward.

So likewise will grace. Mark the growth of divine grace. The seed sown in the heart produces by degrees wonderful effects, and it goes on without noise. It cometh without observation. Though thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain; yet God will give to every seed its own body. Though at first it is but a tender blade which the frost may nip or the foot may crush, yet it will increase to 'the ear,' and then to 'the full corn in the ear.'

II. 'The harvest.'

The seed grows up in the field in order to be the harvest. This is implied in those words, 'First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.' But when the fruit is brought forth—that is, when the fruit is fully ripened—'immediately He putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.' The husbandman, in every part of his year's labour, has an eye to the harvest. It is with a view to this that he ploughs, manures, and sows his ground. He does all this in hope—in hope of a profitable return when the harvest shall arrive. In every successive state of the corn, whether it is in the blade, or in the ear, or in the full corn in the ear, he looks forward to the crop. He has long patience while he waits for the sun's rays, and for the early and the latter rain; and then, when the harvest is fully come, 'immediately he putteth in the sickle.'

Just so is it in the field of grace. The Lord Jesus is the great Husbandman of the Church. He has from the beginning ordained His people to obtain salvation. In all ages He has ever had an eye to His harvest. The harvest-time, He tells us, is the end of the world. The reapers, he adds, are the angels. All that are in their graves shall then hear the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and shall awake: the wicked to everlasting shame and contempt, the righteous to everlasting life. On that day the righteous will, in body and soul, ascend to their Saviour's presence, and thenceforth be for ever with Him in glory. C. CLAYTON.

The Beatitudes.

And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain; and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him. S. MATT. v. 1-10.

THE season of the Christian year which we are now entering upon is not marked by any solemnity which conspicuously attracts us: Christmas is over, Lent is over, Easter is over, Whitsuntide and Trinity Sunday are over, and there is nothing to break the long and even tenor which continues onwards towards Advent. The absence of any such particular solemnity appears to leave a vacant space in which we may possibly have an opportunity of calling attention to these truths before which all other facts and doctrines of the Christian religion are alone important.

I propose to speak of the beatitudes pronounced by our Saviour on the characters in which He most delighted. Those characters are all-important in several ways.

1. First, they open that discourse which, whatever may be the difficulties of particular parts of it, has always been recognised as the

most important part of the New Testament. Nothing else in the gospels, nothing else in S. Paul's epistles, can compare with the interest which attaches to the words derived from our Saviour's lips on this occasion. It is, as it has been well called, the Magna Charta of Christianity. These Beatitudes correspond in the Christian religion to the Ten Commandments delivered on Mount Sinai; they were intended by some good reformers of our Church service to take the place of those Ten Commandments on the three great festivals of the Christian Church which are now finished. They are not questioned, at least in their essential parts, by any of those various inquiries which have thrown some difficulty in the way of accepting this or that saying of our Saviour, this or that writing of His Apostles.

II. Secondly, they put before us what are those qualities, and what are those results which alone the Founder of our religion regarded as of supreme excellence. He does not say, 'Blessed are the Churchmen,' or, 'Blessed are the Nonconformists'; He does not say, 'Blessed are the Presbyterians,' or, 'Blessed are the Episcopalians'; He does not say, 'Blessed are the Methodists,' or, 'Blessed are the Baptists'; He does not say, 'Blessed are the Roman Catholics,' or, 'Blessed are the Protestants'; but He says, 'Blessed are those who show those graces and virtues in the character which may be found in every one of these communities, and under every one of these forms of belief.'

In proportion as we show any of these in our lives, we do what our Master tells us; in proportion as we do not show them, we fail in the purpose for which He lived and died for man. Often in revival and in confessions on our deathbeds, people ask us, 'Are you happy?' 'Are you saved?' Christ gives us the answer, 'You are happy, you are saved, if you seek the happiness, first, of modesty; secondly, of compassion with sorrow; thirdly, of gentleness; fourthly, of an eager desire for justice; fifthly, of purity and singleness of purpose; sixthly, of kindness to man and beast; seventhly, of pacific and loving intercourse; eighthly, of perseverance in spite of difficulty.

III Again, the Beatitudes, as they are called, or, in other words, declaring the happiness of those who fulfil these things in their own lives, is perhaps the best way of leading us to practise them. He does not say, 'Be merciful' or 'Be pure in heart,' but He says, 'Happy are the merciful, happy are the pure in heart'; that is to say, He points out that the happiness of which we all of us, rich and poor, are in search can be found in one or other of these divine qualities.

In this respect the same course was laid down by a great teacher of religion who existed among the heathen in the world of former times, in words which it may perhaps be well for me to read to you, both because they are instructive in themselves, and also because they show the same deep feeling of a desire that man should be happy

and not miserable—the same desire which lay at the bottom of our Saviour's heart.

A disciple of that great teacher of whom I speak, came to him and said, 'Many angels and men have held various things blessings when they were yearning for happiness, do thou declare to us the chief blessing.' This great teacher answered and said, 'Not to serve the foolish, but to serve the wise, to honour the worthy of honour, this is the greatest blessing. To dwell in the pleasant land; to have former good works to look back upon—the right desires of the heart—this is the greatest blessing. Much insight and instruction, self-control, and pleasant speech, and whatever word be well spoken, this is the greatest blessing. To support father and mother, to cherish wife and child, to follow a peaceful calling, this is the greatest blessing. To bestow alms and live righteously; to give help to kindred, to do deeds which cannot be blamed, these are the greatest blessings. To abhor and cease from sin, to abstain from strong drink, not to be weary in well-doing, these are the greatest blessings. Reverence and holiness, contentment and gratitude, the hearing of the law at due seasons, these are the greatest blessings. To be long-suffering and meek, to associate with those who are quiet, and have religious talk at due seasons, these are the greatest blessings. Self-restraint and purity, the knowledge of noble truths, the knowledge and value of rest, this is the greatest blessing. On every side all are invincible who do acts like these; on every side they walk in safety, and theirs is the greatest blessing.'

I have read these words to you, not in order that they may take the place of our Saviour's teaching in the eight Beatitudes, far from it, but in order that you may see how, in this method of instruction, the great lights our God has sent into the world speak, on the whole, in the same voice. These are the beatitudes of millions of our fellow-creatures in India. The Beatitudes of Jesus Christ are far simpler and nobler, but they both spring from the same spirit.

IV. Fourthly, I have taken this subject of the states of mind which our Saviour calls 'blessed' because they furnish to us the great goal or end which will solve to us many difficulties in the great battle of life which we all have before us. This day is the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, the greatest battle of modern times. It is not at all the question, Who should be master of the world? You know the object which sustained our soldiers in that great conflict. It was for the officers and generals the hope of vanquishing the great enemy of England; it was for all the soldiers the great object of fulfilling their duty to their country, and of obtaining that honour which is the soldier's great reward. These are noble motives, and they, no doubt, serve to nerve the heart and will against hardships and suffer-

ings and death. We need not disparage such motives; but we are not all soldiers, and there are honours even greater than the reward of a grateful country. Those qualities of which our Saviour spoke are within the reach of all of us, and they amply serve to sustain us in all the conflicts of poverty and distress with which many of us are encompassed. There are many examples of these different virtues. Sometimes in some rare cases we seem to see a man or a woman of whom it might always be said that you saw the eight Beatitudes written upon their faces. They belong to that circle of a very few by whom the whole world is made happier and better. But also we may see each of them separately, and we may, by dwelling on their separate existence, as exemplified by those living or dead, be enabled to see that such virtues are possible; we may find comfort in dwelling upon them. We might take from those who are commemorated in this abbey some persons for each of these Beatitudes, who might give us something of a glimpse of what is meant by the 'pure in heart,' by 'the merciful,' by the 'poor in spirit,' by 'the peacemaker,' by those who 'hunger and thirst after righteousness,' and those who are 'persecuted for righteousness' sake.' If I can raise your minds to any such virtues, if I can do this in any way so as to produce an impression upon you, that we have something in life worth striving for, I shall not have spoken in vain.

DEAN BRADLEY.

On Christian Courage.

Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left. JOSHUA xxiii. 6.

IN the present discourse, I shall point out some of the instances and occasions in which, as Christians, it will be necessary for you to 'be very courageous, and 'not turn aside to the right hand or to the left'; for although you have not to mix with heathen and idolatrous nations, and to resist the allurements and seductions of their impious and debauched habits, yet you have vice and temptations from without as well as from within, quite sufficient to keep in action the greatest courage you can muster for your safety and defence.

I. In the first place, then, in your relation with your fellow-creatures, in your intercourse with the world, it requires much courage and resolution to be sturdily upright and just. It marks the truly bold man, to do that which is right at all hazards. There is often a narrow, little, selfish policy in worldly minds, that will not

hesitate, even for a paltry consideration, to lose sight of all attention to the rights and feelings of others. Such persons, at length, follow this interested bias so far as to ask first, upon every occasion, not 'On which side does justice lie?' but 'On which side shall I gain the greater advantage?' But this betrays a long practice of selfishness, if not a thorough and habitual want of principle. Worldly persons, indeed, have adopted an uncharitable general maxim, that every man may be tempted to act unjustly; or, to use their own phrase, that every man has his price; that there is no one who, for some consideration or other, would not commit almost any action. Now, here, then, where the maxim applies, is the courage that we are speaking of required.

II. Courage is requisite even in doing good. Our good actions may cost us much trouble and even expense, much opposition, much vexation, and much misrepresentation; for, our good may not only be evil spoken of, but it may be to ourselves a positive evil in a worldly and temporal point of view. On some occasions we may have to encounter the resistance of the indolent and the selfish; the thwarting malignity of envy, that will never either co-operate or commend; the sneers of the niggardly, who revenge an extorted charity by slandering the man that shamed them to it; and the unkind constructions of the worldly, who never attribute disinterested motives to a prominence in well-doing. On other occasions we may be induced to benefit others, even against their will; to succour the worthless and ungrateful; to weary ourselves in long, and perhaps for the time, fruitless, attempts to soften the obstinate, persuade the wilful, reform the profligate. In all these cases we want also a bold and patient decision of character.

III. Again, it requires courage to forgive injuries and endure wrongs; as well as, on the other hand, to ask for forgiveness and to make reparation. Yet the Christian must do both when necessary. He must be deaf to the vindictive cries of wounded pride; he must reject the suggestions of a too sensitive vanity; he must look to his own amount of faults, and imperfections, and actual offences; and then forgive and forget to the utmost of his power, as he hopes himself to have his own transgressions cancelled at the day of judgment.

IV. Courage is required again in maintaining truth and sincerity. I do not mean by this merely avoiding flagrant falsehood and equivocation, but acquiring habits of open and frank avowal of our minds, except where we may give needless pain or offence.

V. Courage is very necessary also in setting a good example. We are neither to 'love the praise of men more than the praise of God,' nor to 'follow a multitude to do evil.' Our blessed Saviour told His

disciples that they were to be 'the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill, which cannot be hid.' They were to 'let their light so shine before men, that they might see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven.' Now, this requires great soundness of principle, joined to courageous resolution. The world has its own maxims, manners, and sentiments; and it loves cordially only its own followers. But the Christian cannot serve two masters; and he has already pledged himself to serve God. He, then, who would temporise, who would comply with both just so far as suits his interests, who would adopt the easy outward forms of religion, profess its doctrines, and assume its language, while the world and other idols possess his heart, is no Christian; wants its first principles, much more its courage; and must at length have his portion with the hypocrites.

VI. Lastly, courage is most requisite in striving against all the inward corruption of our fallen nature. A. B. EVANS.

The Credentials of Christianity.

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. S. MATT. xi. 5.

JESUS, when He said that, stood face to face with two of the worst miseries of humanity—misery of mind and misery of body. On the one hand was a group of men who had asked a question: 'Art Thou He that should come,' they wanted to know, 'or do we look for another?' You see how that question touches the heart of Christianity. The supreme fact that differences Christianity from all the other religions of history is the fact of the life and character of Jesus. The essential assertion of Christianity is the assertion that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed He that should come, and that we need look for no other. That question set a doubt upon the central article of the Christian creed. These men were unbelievers.

On the other hand was a considerable company of people, some blind, some lame, some lepers, some deaf, some mourning the dead, and all of them, probably, poor. These people represented pain and poverty.

We have no greater problems in the world to-day than the problem of doubt and the problem of poverty. These two great questions, like the enigma of the Sphinx, demand solution. And we must somehow answer them, or pay the fearful penalty. Doubt threatens the Church, poverty threatens the State. Jesus Christ stood face to

face with both these problems, and answered them in the words that I have quoted.

The unbelief, in this instance, came from John the Baptist. These doubters were messengers of his, and that great question was his question. Even the forerunner had fallen from the faith.

I. Much of this unbelief of John's was due, no doubt, to physical conditions. John was in prison. He was shut up in a black fortress of Herod's, over in Moab, on the borders of the Dead Sea. That imprisonment itself, John felt naturally enough, meant the real end of all his work. Those great walls which shut out the sun and the sky stood straight across the path of the prophet's future. Thus far was he to go, and no farther. Jesus was to increase, and he was to decrease—John had already accepted that. But this meant failure. It seemed, no doubt, to John, as it seemed in the old days to Elijah, that his life had been in vain. And he wondered, perhaps, if it had not been a tragic mistake even from the beginning. Had he, after all, been the forerunner of the Messiah? This man of Nazareth, was He really the Holy One of Israel? Was He the Christ, or do we look for another?

And all that depression was deepened by John's bodily weakness. No man resorted to that frowning prison for his health. Whoever was shut up in one of those damp cells lost more than liberty; he lost health with it. The chances are that John was sick. That was the beginning of it. His body was out of order, and that set his mind out of order. First disease, then depression, and then doubt.

Almost everybody knows how that is. A great deal of unbelief is not the real voice of the man. We are greatly troubled; we are in a morbid and weak condition of body, and we seem to be getting every day farther away from God; the sky gets black over our head, prayer becomes only a formality, and faith seems to be dying. But the real trouble is that we are not ourselves. We are like one of those blind people who stood that day by the side of Jesus, and could not see His face. He was there, and God's beautiful bright world was there also, but these men were blind. Pretty soon they got better, and saw clearly.

What we need when we fall into this kind of unbelief is not the parson, but the doctor. It is not theology that we need, but medicine. The best plan is to realise the conditions; to recognise the fact that even the spirit, in this life, depends upon the body, and that what is really the matter with us is not lack of faith, but lack of health; and so to use the right remedies, if we can find them, and to go out into the pure air, and to regain our strength. We will find that strength of faith will return with it.

II. Some of this unbelief of John's, however, may have been due

not so much to depression as to disappointment. John the Baptist was a man whose life was devoted to one single purpose. His business was to prepare the way for the Messiah. That great ideal hero and deliverer, toward whose coming the hopes of the Hebrew people had been turned for centuries, had at last come. And it was appointed to John to find Him and make Him known. Naturally, during those years that he had spent solitary in the desert, he had meditated on the character and work of the Messiah day after day. He had elaborated his ideal of the Christ. He had made up his mind what sort of being He would be. And then when the real Christ was set beside this ideal Christ of John's, John may have been disappointed. Somehow Jesus of Nazareth disappointed almost everybody's preconceived idea. The whole Jewish nation was anticipating quite another character of Christ. They were grievously disappointed, so much so that they rejected Jesus altogether. But it is quite possible that nobody was more disappointed than John the Baptist.

A great deal of the unbelief that we meet in the streets and that we experience in our own hearts to-day grows, just as John's did, out of disappointment.

III. The Church of Christ stands to-day just where Christ stood. On the one hand is unbelief, and on the other hand are pain and poverty. Men are coming constantly with that old crucial question: 'Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?' That question touches, as I said, the very heart of Christianity. The finality of Jesus of Nazareth, the supremacy of Jesus of Nazareth—this is what men are asking about to-day. They want to know if the Christian religion is the final, the supreme, the divine religion, or shall we look for another? What are the grounds for accepting and believing Christianity? What are the credentials of Christianity?

And the answer to the question, if we are to return an answer that shall be persuasive and convincing, must be not an argument, not an assertion, but such a sight as Jesus showed. Men must see our good works: then we may expect them to glorify our divine Master, and our Father which is in heaven. The credentials of Christianity are not creeds but deeds. Wherever the Christian religion has ceased to be helpful, men have ceased to believe in it; and rightly, because there it has ceased to be Christian. But wherever Christianity has been able to bid men look, as Jesus did, and see the sorrows of the world comforted, and the wounds of the world bound up, and the good news of the Gospel carried, with light and hope in it, to the hearts of the poor, there the Church has won allegiance, and will always win allegiance.

Whoever is himself in doubt about the Christian faith will find more help in charity than in theology. Let him not rely so much

upon the reading of many Christian books, as upon the doing of many Christian works. Let him simply try day after day to live like a Christian, and he will presently find himself believing like a Christian. Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge. Whoever does the will of God shall know the truth of God. John the Baptist had faith enough so long as he was busy at his blessed work of helping people. It was only when he was shut up in prison, and had no chance to minister to men, that he fell into doubt. Try to live as Christ lived; think not of yourself, but of your brother's need; every day somehow help somebody; more and more learn the spirit of Christ; thus will you come unconsciously and inevitably into the possession of all essential Christian truth.

GEORGE HODGE.

Self-Denial.

And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. S. Mark viii. 34, 35.

IN this chapter there is a great dividing line between the first and the second parts of the ministry of our Lord. He has been teaching and preaching here and there in Galilee, and often obliged to move from place to place for fear of His life. And now the effort in Galilee seems to be over, seems also to be very disappointing, and short of what the Founder of the Kingdom of God had intended. One thing remains—they will not listen to Him; but He can die for them, as He had intended. He turns His back upon Galilee, and sets His face towards Jerusalem. Here He is, lingering in Cæsarea Philippi. He has not yet—for there are a few months yet to come—He has not yet set out for Jerusalem, but before He makes known this new and terrible intelligence to His disciples, He asks them, 'Whom do men say that I am?' Whatever the rest of the world may have thought of His ministry, these are staunch and true men: 'Thou art the Christ; Thou art Messiah. We all—I speak for all,' says S. Peter, 'that we all believe.' And then, with these faithful ones around Him, He announces His death amidst great persecutions, amidst complete ignominy, the triumph of the Scribe and Pharisee, and, to use a human expression, the divine defeat. Naturally enough, we think, they would not follow Him there too. 'Be it far from Thee, Lord!'—the King, the Prophet, the Anointed, to be put to death by vile hands!—'this shall not be unto Thee.' The mind of

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Christ is full of what He is about to undertake, the highest duty ever performed by one in human shape, and from the highest motives. His mind is strung up with this great purpose, and so He sternly rebukes—'Get thee behind me, Satan'—any one who would interfere with the execution of that great duty. And now, when He has told them that, He gives them a kind of new law: 'Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.' Just as near the entrance to the first part of His ministry He did give a law in the Sermon on the Mount, so here He gives this, which is the very kernel of all the highest morality, of all that is Christian in morals, to be their law to the end. And just as a divine witness was borne to Him at the beginning of the first ministry, so now in the Transfiguration is a fresh divine witness borne to Him that the disciples may be strengthened for what they have to go through. So, if you will imagine for a moment that the life of Jesus in the gospels is as a great church in which we enter to worship, this is the inner sanctuary of that church or temple into which He is about to pass, and here, in the shortest form, is the morality that was to guide, ay, and did guide these faithful disciples. Here is the one rule which binds us to-day, which is the source of all that is good in us, and the failure in which is the cause of all our misery and defeat; and though we forget it, we will try to bring it before our conscience once again, and see to what it obliges.

Well then, there are three points in it—they are not all the same—'Let him deny himself,' 'Let him take up his cross,' 'Let him follow Me.'

I. A man may deny himself in no Christian spirit. Self-denial is the secret of success in everything. The notion people have, that the faculties of a man ripen by a certain amount of indulgence, is a mere deceit of Satan. Every one knows that the strength and perfection of a man—I do not speak now of religion, but of everything—comes out of self-denial. There wants something more—'Let him take up his cross.' The popular form of interpretation of this will not quite do. It is not that we should bear our sickness patiently, or our loss of fortune, or our loss of friends: it is an active something. He who presently marches before—you have it in the tenth chapter of S. Mark—walks before His disciples, steadfastly going towards Jerusalem, whilst they, mourning and perplexed, follow after Him; He is doing a voluntary act. And the taking up the cross must betoken not mere endurance, but something active, and it means for us the doing our duty. That is the cross to the flesh, and the inclination, the purpose of duty which we are bound to perform and to carry through. And we are also to follow Him—and here, again, is no repetition—to follow Him in His patient obedience to God, in

His gentleness and goodness, but above all, in His love which embraces all mankind, and which ought to soften and sweeten every hour of every life that can justly be called Christian. Here, then, is the precept: 'Deny thyself, bear thy duty, and bear it in the spirit of love and obedience in which Christ moved towards His death for us.'

II. Christ sanctifies Himself for us. He says so, 'For their sakes I sanctify Myself.' 'The Holy, can He be sanctified?' Yes, in this sense: He makes Himself a Holy Victim, consecrates Himself upon the Cross—the altar—consecrates Himself to God to heal the sins of men. He did sanctify Himself. There must be those amongst you who are capable of imitating Him even in this. Have nothing to do with this accursed thing. You can afford to play, it shall not hurt you; you have resolution to know when to stop. Far better, propose to make yourself a witness against it for every one that knows you. Sanctify yourself in this for the sake of the brethren; put your standard of duty somewhat higher. The love of Christ constrains you. He loved you, and you will love others as He loved you. You will have nothing to do with it. It applies to all the other vices to which I have just alluded. It will turn a man into a protector of a woman instead of one who will cruelly wrong and ruin her; it will turn a man into a strict advocate of temperance; it will make him sober in meat and drink. If our brother is hurt by it, why should we not try to prevent the hurt? We should be acting in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

W. THOMSON.

Practical Sympathy.

'*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* S. MATTHEW v. 7.

I. WHAT one name best describes that legion of demons which afflict humanity? Is not that name 'Selfishness'? Every man and woman that exorcises that demon and tramples on that many-headed monster of self helps to elevate mankind. With the world, the flesh, and the devil always near us, always tempting us with their soft seductions or their imperious demands, the lives which most of us lead tend, unless we are very watchful, to be inexpressibly petty and vulgar. A man works from morning to night in his shop or his office, he pays his subordinates the least that he decently can, he devotes himself to the making and hoarding of money for his own glorification and the enriching of his family, and, in a life essentially small and selfish, gets, if he is not very careful, to think that his duty to God is well discharged if he sits somnolently in his pew once on

Sunday, his duty to his neighbour if he grudgingly gives a guinea or two here and there, which all put together represents perhaps a hundredth part of his annual income. A woman decks herself in jewels and flaunts about the hollow shams of society, lives in the thick of small pleasureless dissipations, never has a thought beyond herself or the slightly-expanded egotism of domesticity, and then thinks if she gives the most fractional minim of her time and her money to a little religionism she has done all she has to do towards the amelioration of the dark underworld of woe that underlies life's shining surface, dim populous pain and multitudinous toil unheeded by the heedless world which treads the piteous upturned faces underfoot in the gay rout that rushes to its pleasures. And so the habitual worshippers of Mammon think that all is well if they appear now and then in the temple of God. But are these characters worth forming? Is this all the heroism, is this all the impetus which the gospel has inspired? Has Christianity done no more for the world than to spread it over with this thin veneer of superficial respectability? Is this all for which Christ died? Oh, we all need to be more sincerely earnest, more humbly watchful, lest our religion, being devoid of mercy, be all in vain, and lest in our shallow hearts the spirit of the world, disguised perhaps under the gilded coil of conceit and formalism, displace and quench the Holy Spirit of God.

II. Now, what has been the motive power of noble lives? What is it which has lifted them, on the double wings of purity and kindness, above the oozy waste of our commonplace? I think the moral power which has given such sweep to their wings has been always twofold. First, 'mercy and human pity.' There are beautiful souls who have so deeply suffered with those whom they always see suffering that they have asked for no higher service than to do them good, and no higher reward than that service, than the unspeakable gift of being intrusted with such a task.

The other great motive for such noble lives has been the 'love of Christ.' The love of Christ has constrained them. I do not say that before Christ came there was no true pity, or that all men were fiends. The Athenians built an altar to Pity, yet whole populations of ancient pagans could look on enraptured while hundreds of wretched gladiators hacked each other to pieces in the arenas, and some even of the best ancient philosophers regarded pity as at best a pardonable weakness; but I say that since Christ came, pity has acquired thousandfold force. It was pity that rescued the perishing children, it was pity that led Telemachus to descend into the arena to end the cruel wrongs of gladiators, it was pity that built our hospitals, it was pity which purified our prisons, it was pity which flung the ægis of the State over the children in the factories and the women in the

mines, it was pity which made the Swedish princess say that the tear of gratitude which fell upon her hand from the eyes of a sufferer was worth more to her than all the jewels she had sold to help the poor. And whence came this pity? It came from the love of God.

Even as it requires the sun and the air and the clouds and all the sea and the stupendous laws of the universe to produce so much as a single dew-drop, so it requires great principles to enable any of you to perform even little duties. DEAN FARRAR.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Fear of God. 1 S. John iv. He that fears God as his enemy is the most completely miserable person in the world. We do not know God if we can think any hard thing concerning Him.

Godly fear. 1 S. John iv. The fear of God promotes spiritual joy: it is the morning star, which ushers in the sunlight of comfort. 'Walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.' God mingles joy with fear, that fear may not be slavish.

The existence of fear in religion does not depend upon the circumstance of our being sinners; it is short of that. Were we as pure as the angels, yet in His sight one should think we could not but fear, before whom the heavens are not clean, nor the angels free from folly. The seraphim themselves veiled their faces while they cried, Glory! Even then, were it true that sin were not a great evil, or were no great evil in us, nevertheless the mere circumstance that God is infinite and all-perfect is an overwhelming thought to creatures and mortal men, and ought to lead all persons who profess religion to profess also religious fear, however natural it is for irreligious men to disdain the feeling.

Fear and love. 1 S. John iv. The chains of love are stronger than the chains of fear. Herod's love for Herodias was too hard for his fear of S. John.

Fear always necessary. 1 S. John iv. There is equal occasion for fear, whether it pleases our Lord that we should tread in the steps of His humiliation, or be counted worthy of the vision of His glory, lest we should despair, or lest we should be puffed up.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Confession. 1 S. John iv. THE confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works.

Boswell asked Dr. Johnson what he thought of the practice of confession. Johnson said, 'Why, I don't know but that it is a good thing. The Scripture says, "Confess your faults one to another"; and the priests confess as well as the laity. Then it must be considered that their absolution is only upon repentance, and often upon penance also. You think your sins may be forgiven without penance, upon repentance alone.

Confession an honouring of God. 1 S. John iv. THE confession of our sins doth no less honour God than His glory is blemished by their commission.

Riches. S. Luke xvi. 19. IT is not our means, but our sins, that shut us out from God. I will be ashamed of nothing but my sins, and proud of nothing but that I am a Christian.

Riches good, if rightly used. S. Luke xvi. 19. IF our riches possess us, instead of our possessing them, we have changed our God, and lost ourselves; but if we have learnt to use our wealth, and not enjoy it, we may be no less gracious than rich. If a rich man have a large, and humble, and a just hand, he inherits the blessing of the poor; if a poor man have a proud heart, and a thievish hand, he carries away the woe from the rich. . . . Let me say with Agur, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches'; but whatsoever God gives, I am both thankful and indifferent; so as, while I am rich in estate, I may be poor in spirit, and while I am poor in estate I may be rich in grace.

Second Sunday after Trinity

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	1 S. JOHN III. 13-24.
GOSPEL,	S. LUKE XIV. 16-24.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	JUDGES IV
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	JUDGES V. OR JUDGES VI. 11.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

All Things are Ready.

All things are ready. S. MATTHEW XXII. 4.

WE are so accustomed, on our part, to a want of readiness to go to God, and we see everybody about us so unready too, that it has grown out of it, as the natural consequence, that we think there must be a great want of readiness on God's part to come to us.

Hence when a man moved by the Holy Ghost first begins to turn his thoughts to God, almost his invariable feeling is as he stands trembling, 'Is God prepared to receive me?' It mingles with almost every prayer he says, 'Will God take this prayer?' And the answer generally presents itself in the negative, so that the practical result is that he can scarcely be persuaded but that a certain time must elapse, and certain acts must be performed, and certain preliminaries adjusted, before he can find God to love him. And Satan loves to picture an unready God.

Do I read your hearts rightly when I think that there is many a person with a feeling like this, 'If I were sure that God was willing and ready to receive me as His child, if I were quite certain that I should find God smiling upon me, if I was sure that I should have an

affectionate welcome, I could this very moment give up everything and go to God. But I cannot look at myself and believe that." And the consequence of this want of realisation of God's ready mind is that not only is God wronged in that most glorious of His attributes, of His foreknowledge and forelove, but many a soul is deterred from making one spiritual effort, because there must be confidence before you can make effort, and many a real child of God is kept in a long distress of anxious uncertainty.

Therefore, it is evident, it is of the first moment, that we should impress our minds with the power of that great truth, which I am commissioned to bear to you, 'All things are ready.'

And oh, it is so pleasant to turn from the narrownesses, and the littlenesses, and the sluggishnesses of man, and get out into the largenesses, and the freeness, of God's anticipating, waiting love—'all things are ready.'

Now I believe that the fact of God's secret expectation of every sinner's soul is so diametrically opposite to that image of His reluctance which Satan loves to draw before your mind, that we have neither words nor thoughts which could reach the measure of the readiness in which God stands waiting for us every hour, far more desirous and anxious to come to us than we ever are to go to Him. Whatever in this whole world is ready compared with this, that ready thing is unready.

For observe three things: the readiness of God rests upon an eternal counsel; upon a finished work; and upon a free grace. To those three points I shall ask your attention—an eternal counsel, a finished work, and a free grace.

I. May we venture to look down for a moment into the depth of the eternal counsel? You must be aware that nothing ever takes life, or form, or being, in this visible universe but that it existed first invisible in the mind of God. That is the chart, and everything copies it; there is the mould, here is the casting; that is the original, these are the copies. The Lamb that bled on Calvary was but 'the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.' Every soul called and drawn out and saved was a soul 'chosen in Christ before the world was.' And the last benediction of the righteous at the day of judgment is but the ramification of a sentence which was given in the present mind of God from all eternity, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.'

Thus we go back across the confines of time into a trackless immensity beyond it, and we cannot find a spot where we do not find it then in the mind of God, 'all things are ready.'

Who shall say when was that point, how far down in eternity, or

which the Holy Ghost spoke, 'Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart.'

Adam falls and brings down a curse; but he found grace ready, with all its mighty plan of restoration before the hour of his necessity, and the promise of the cure was beforehand with the curse.

David awakes up to repentance, but ere he cries, 'I have sinned against the Lord,' Nathan declares it as of a matter purely historical, already finished and complete, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin.'

Abraham saw, probably on Mount Moriah, 'the day of Christ,' 'he saw it and was glad.' Did he see a future or a present thing? a future doubtless, but no less present. For 'before Abraham was, I am.'

And ere he took the knife to slay his son the ram was caught in the thicket by his horns.

Thus we love to throw an eternity into the preparedness of the scheme in the mind of Almighty God, in the salvation of a sinner, and we cannot date the time in which that assurance began to turn, 'all things are ready.'

II. But we shall see the truth standing stronger still in the finished work of Christ. I wish you all understood all the strength and all the comfort which lie in that true expression, 'the finished work of Christ.' It means nothing less than this, that when Christ declared in that most wonderful hour, 'It is finished,' your salvation was so exquisitely complete that not only does it need no addition, but that it cannot bear it, or be capable of an addition; to add is to destroy. And sooner might you attempt with your unpractised hand to improve the most finished work of the sculptor's art—ay, sooner might you mend the heavens—than you could by any work, or any prayer, or any faith, or any thought, or any love of yours, increase by one iota the beauty and efficacy of that accomplished righteousness of Christ. There it stands, entire, final, a law all kept, a debt all paid, a guilt all expiated, a heaven all wrought, a God all satisfied. Mix one act or thought with it of merit, and to you it is not. But put out your hand and take it, magnify it in its sufficiency, rest upon it in its solitariness, receive it in its greatness, and it is your life.

III. And, thirdly, as ready as is the atoning work of Christ to every sinner's hand, so ready is the mind of the Father to give it.

For see now the free grace of God in this matter. The love of God is in itself an object which we have no power to grasp. There are many beautiful works of God's hand in nature which reflect it, but not to speak it. There are many beautiful interpositions in providence, but none can fairly represent God's love, that is so very deep, so vastly large. Therefore, God has given one manifestation, 'In

this was manifest the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.' And what must that be, of which that wondrous death of Christ is a manifestation! What must be the fountain from which that stream runs! Surely the mind of God is all grace, and all grace is here.

Or look at it thus. God is laying up everything for His own glory. His glory is His sovereignty to save. So that we may not only say, 'Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace'; but, therefore it is of grace that it might be to the glory of God. And so His glory is wedded to the freeness of His grace.

Therefore it is that at this moment God is waiting, and has been waiting so very long for your poor unwilling soul. Therefore, every attribute is beckoning, therefore He has so held you that you might hold Him, therefore He is binding you with 'the cords of a man, and the bands of love,' therefore His language is, 'Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

'Come ye to the waters,' *i.e.* Come down to the shores—come down to the shores where the freighted argosies lie—come down to the shores—'Come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye; buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.'

Seeing, then, that the counsel is eternal, the work finished, the grace free, what is not ready?

Your pardon? At this instant your pardon lies before you, executed, signed, sealed, directed! It is like a letter presented to you for acceptance; the address upon the letter is, 'To a sinner.' Own that destination; say 'It is mine!' and then you may take it, and open it, and read it, and appropriate it, and live by it.

But is it peace; is peace ready? There are three things. Peace has all the power of a covenant made by the Father eternally, of a testament left by the Lord Jesus Christ when He died, and of a gift given by the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory. 'Peace I leave with you,'—there is the testament; 'My peace I give unto you,' there is the sovereign largess; 'Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'

But is your sanctification ready? What is that moving in your mind? What is that stirring of some thoughts which you are feeling in your heart? The Holy Ghost—the going forth of the Holy Ghost to be a pledge to you that He will do everything for you—that if you will accept that treasure of love, He will carry on the work of your inward sanctification to the end till it is perfected. It is the demonstration of an internal evidence that holiness is ready for you.

But is it heaven? Is that ready? It is more than eighteen hundred years since Christ said, 'I will go and prepare a place'; and do you think it is not prepared by this time? May we not be quite sure that to-day the place, the very seat amidst the ranges of the blessed which just fits your being, and matches to your desire, the place where you could be happiest, the place where you could best glorify God, is prepared for you.

And do not you suppose that with that prepared seat, there is an angelic company waiting with stretched neck to see you come and fill it?

May I not, then, take up my confident expectation, and say of the state of the fountain, and of the state of the table, and of the state of the feast, and of the state of the mansion, and of the state of the glory, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'

We have all known seasons when our minds have hushed themselves into a deep, solemn, trembling expectation. We had finished preparation, our work was done, and the mind had nothing to do but to expect. There was a little interval, an interval of breathless waiting; and in a very little while either the object we loved would come, or hope must go away disappointed.

Now to me it seems that is just the season in which we are standing. 'All things are ready,' the preparation is over, the bag stands open, the pen is in the hand, the Holy Spirit is on hovering wing brooding over the soul, the fountain is unsealed, the gates unclosed, every angel stretches to his harp to sing the penitent's return, God sits upon the mercy-seat with wide embrace, 'and the Spirit and the Bride say, Come,' and all heaven cries, Come, and eternity trembles in the balances.

My sermon is another evidence of God's readiness. He will not mock you, He would not open my lips to say to you 'Come,' if He was not waiting to have you.

And what and if, in the midst of all God's readiness, that soul of yours is the one thing unready, untuned, unprepared? What and if it hug the dust, and keep its clogged and cumbered hold on the riches, and the businesses, and the pleasures, and the cares of this thick, dirty world? What and if it lie a-bed, and getting up too late, is found unwashed from the world and undressed for heaven, unsanctified and unready when it is time to go in?

Oh, then the writing pen must drop, the book must close, the grieved Spirit must fold His wing, the fountains cease to run, the gates must shut, the angels weep, and God go up into His hiding-place, and from thence proclaim, 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and you are not saved.'

But once more the servant of God stands in the broadway of the

world, and cries to-night, 'All things are ready!' 'All things are ready!' And oh may He to whom it belongs make some one soul 'willing in the day of His power' to say, 'Yes, O God, for my heart is ready, my heart is ready.' JAMES VAUGHAN.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Sure Test of Piety

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 1 S. John iii. 20.

HERE are three courts in which each believer is to be tried, and in each of those three courts he ought to be acquitted. First of all there is:

I. The court of the world. 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report,' are the things which we all should seek after and practise. Our Lord and Daniel, Samuel and Paul were acquitted in the court of the world.

Still, of itself the good opinion of our fellow-men is not a sufficient proof of vital piety. For the most part, the standard of the world is a very low one. It soon acquits those whom it is called upon to judge. If you are tolerably correct in your moral conduct, if you now and then bestow a subscription on a charity, and if you are not guilty of any open breach of God's commandments, the world will speak well of you, and when you die they will talk of your being undoubtedly saved. But in these matters we must not deceive our own selves. After the death of the rich man in the parable, I have no doubt, that his friends who attended his funeral were all loud in their praises of his kindness and good-heartedness and hospitality; but did their praises at all avail to cool that parched tongue, or to ease the agony of those tormenting flames? And so it is. Man's thoughts are not as God's thoughts, and therefore we must never risk our salvation on the approbation of our fellow-men. We must not be satisfied with a verdict of acquittal from the first court, the court of the world. We must come to a second court:

II. The court of conscience. 'If our heart condemn us,' says S. John; and again, 'If our heart condemn us not.' Speaking even of the heathen, the Apostle Paul writes, 'Their conscience also bearing them witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing.' We are told therefore to have a conscience void of offence both towards men and towards God. Most important it is that we

should be able to have our heart or conscience testifying that our conduct is correct before God.

But here also we must be upon our guard, that we obtain a right verdict. Conscience is not always a safe guide. Conscience, like the memory, and like the will, has become diseased through the fall of Adam. Its verdict cannot therefore be always depended on. It sometimes make grievous, yea fatal, mistakes. It may be an ill-formed conscience.

It may be a partial conscience. We can see what is wrong in others, but not in ourselves. David could perceive the wickedness of the rich man in the parable of the ewe lamb, but could not see his own wickedness. Herod would not violate his oath; but he scrupled not to murder John the Baptist. The Pharisees would not go into the judgment-hall lest they should defile themselves; but they did not hesitate to put the innocent Lord to death. And your conscience would be clamorous if you committed some enormous wickedness; but you can go on neglecting known duties, such as secret prayer and study of God's Word; and your conscience, being partial, connives at the sin.

The unconverted man's conscience is, therefore, a deceiving conscience. What is conscience in the unconverted sinner like? It is like a muffled bell in a church steeple. There is a dull and heavy sound; but not the sound, loud and clear, which proceeds from a conscience taught by God's Word and enlightened by God's Spirit. We must therefore bring ourselves to a third court, if we would obtain a verdict on which we may safely depend. We must quit the court of the world. We must also quit the court of conscience, which often condemns when it ought to acquit, and which often acquits when it ought to condemn; and we must bring our cause into another court:

III. The court of God. We must reverently bend down our ear and say, as said David, 'I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me.' He judges righteous judgment. 'If our own heart condemn us'—our own heart so partial, so sleepy, so ill-informed, so ignorant—how much more will God condemn us? 'God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.' To Him all hearts are open. From Him no secrets are hid. He knows all our sins of thought, as well as our various neglects of duty, and actual commissions of iniquity. He knoweth all things. He perceives sins where our own consciences and the world fully approve. Oftentimes 'that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.' Men often call evil good, and good evil. They put darkness for light, and light for darkness. They put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

But how are we to obtain a favourable verdict in God's court? By ascertaining what God's mind is, as revealed to us in His Word. We should therefore seek to find out in the Scripture what are sure marks of conversion, and what is really essential to the Christian character. Now in this very chapter God gives us various marks, by which we may perceive whether we really belong to Him or not. Let us examine these tests.

1. One test is the love of holiness.

2. Another mark set before us in this chapter is absence of hatred. This forms a clear line of distinction between those who will hereafter dwell with God in heaven, and those who will live for ever with Satan in hell.

3. But there is one other very striking test for self-examination; and that is, 'What think ye of Christ?' We see from this chapter what John, the beloved disciple, thought of Christ. In his thoughts Christ was ever uppermost. Is this your view of the Lord Jesus? Is Christ all in all to your souls? Is He your wisdom, your righteousness, your sanctification? Is Christ to you the chiefest of ten thousand, and altogether lovely?

It only remains for me to add one practical remark, and that is this: Beware of a wrong confidence. A good man, just before he died, quoted those beautiful words, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.' Yes, we cannot have peace, perfect peace, confidence towards God, except by trusting, by believing in God, the God of our salvation. C. CLAYTON.

Reality

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart.
1 S. JOHN iii. 20.

I THE words of my text, 'if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart,' are, as it were, the central words, the climax of a great lesson on reality which S. John wrote for his children in Jesus Christ. They are taken from the Epistle for to-day, a portion of the First Epistle of S. John. This first and longest of the three Epistles of S. John appears at first sight to have as its sole theme the love of God, and the full realisation of that love by the faithful Christian; but if you will look at it more closely, you will see how continually S. John comes back with ever fresh insistence to that which he urges at the outset, the vital necessity of agreement between our profession and our practice, our words and our deeds, the vital necessity, that is, of reality. Read with this idea before us,

the Epistle appears to have as one of its chiefest aims and objects the inculcation of this lesson of 'truth in the inmost parts.' Full of gentleness and love as S. John was, so that in his old age he summed up the whole teaching of the gospel in the constant repetition of these words only, 'Little children, love one another'—gentle and loving as he was, you will find, I believe, that the word 'liar' occurs more frequently in S. John's First Epistle than in all the other epistles of the New Testament put together, so earnest was he in his insistence on the virtue of truth, so determined in his denunciation of that which is not true, is not real. Thus, 'God is light, and if we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not tell the truth'; 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us'; 'He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him'; 'He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness'; 'Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and hereby we shall assure our hearts before Him, for if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.'

II. 'If our heart condemn us,' that is, I suppose, if our conscience condemn us, not that animal heart which is 'deceitful above all things and desperately wicked'; that heart 'out of which proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, thefts,' and so on, that heart to which we should not think of referring any question of the avoidance or the condemnation of those things to which itself incites us, but the heart 'that inditeth ever of a good matter'; that heart with which a man believeth unto righteousness; that heart in which he standeth steadfast; that heart to which S. John tell us we may with confidence refer the judgment of our actions. He suggests a test that we far too seldom really apply. A very large number of men never allow their hearts to speak to them fairly, freely, and seriously, never refer some parts of their lives to the judgment of that keen tribunal, or refer them only with such reservations and limitations as keep out of sight the real question, and procure a verdict on some side issue or some mere detail. It is, indeed, impossible that men who live such lives as hundreds of thousands of men around us do live—I do not mean of necessity what we call evil-living men—it is impossible that they should refer their lives unreservedly to the judgment of their hearts, with the determination to give full ear to its decision. A man who could do it, and did it, would be a man with a conscience void of offence; would be a man without—to say nothing of what the world recognises as grave sin—without pettiness, without grudge, without resentment, without meanness or malice of any kind of degree—sins those which have in many ways a worse effect upon

character than some sins which the world is more ready to recognise as sins—he would be, I need not say, so far as his inner life was concerned, emphatically a happy man.

III. 'God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things,' 'quickening, powerful, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit,' 'a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart'; 'there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight, for all things are naked and laid open under the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.' Our heart is of itself sufficient to condemn us, if we do not silence it. The unconscious influence of some noble-minded man or noble-minded woman condemns us unfalteringly. God is greater than our heart, is greater than either, and knoweth all things, by whom actions are weighed; the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for the Lord looketh on the heart.

What shall we say of our unreality under that divine gaze—that of which we do not allow our own heart to speak to us, which the purest and best men and women we know would shudder at—that under the eye of God? Can any one endure the thought that there is no corner or recess of his heart not purified and cleansed for that eye, so far as man can be purified and cleansed? S. John, who leaned on Jesus' breast, writing as he does of the boundless love of God, yet warns us in terrible language of trifling with that love, of pretending to be in harmony with it, and professing to be in obedience to God and love for our fellow-men, and in our heart having neither. Can we endure that He shall see in us that vital flaw, shall know us to be unreal?

CANON BROWNE.

The Twofold Witness.

And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us. 1 S. JOHN iii. 24.

THE Apostle speaks of a mystical union between God and the believer,—God dwelling in the believer, and the believer in God. And then he affirms that by and through the Spirit we ascertain, or become sure, of this indwelling of God. No doubt, then, it is the office of the Holy Ghost to convey to us intimations of our safety, and to furnish us with that internal evidence which is to certify us of our justification with God. But, then, it yet remains to be decided what this testimony of the Holy Ghost is,—of what nature, and in what way communicated.

We desire to avoid most carefully the appearance of resolving into

mere enthusiasm all pretensions to a secret and indescribable testimony. I charge no man with not speaking the words of soberness and truth, because I find him dwelling on heavenly communications with which he is privileged, and appealing to discoveries which God is pleased to make of himself in the depths and solitudes of his own heart. God forbid that we should, in the least degree, limit the operations of the Spirit; God forbid that we should throw the slightest shadow of suspicion on those joys of the righteous with which no stranger intermeddleth, as though we questioned that they furnished an evidence to a man of his being a true believer. But we wish to declare that this secret testimony, this witness which can satisfy none but the individual in whose breast it is planted, may easily be counterfeited, and is not to be trusted when it stands alone. And the question now is, whether it be of an evidence such as this that S. John speaks in our text? The question is whether that testimony of the Holy Ghost, to which the Apostle refers, be a silent and untangible thing, coming in the form of a rapture or ecstasy, and calculated to convince none but the individual by whom it is felt; the question is, whether a man, who has no external and visible proof to which he can appeal, may justly shield himself beneath our text, as proving that the necessary testimony may be given within; and, whether, on the other hand, a man, whose life is a witness to his piety, may not suppose himself void of the Spirit's attestation, if he be not favoured with some special and animating sense of forgiveness? These are questions which we must diligently apply to ourselves. Observe how the text speaks, 'He that keepeth His commandments.' So, then, the party with whom the Spirit witnesses, as to the indwelling of God, is one who is labouring to keep God's commandments. And here, at once, is an external evidence, something definite on which to fasten, and something definite by which to reckon. Let us bring our subject to a definite shape. Let us first endeavour to show you, from our text, what the witness of the Spirit is not; and, in the second place, let us consider what that witness is; and then we shall be in a position to enter into all the force of the saying, 'And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.'

I. Now our text bears considerable resemblance to words used by S. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.' The Spirit itself is a fellow-witness with our spirit. Such is the import of the expression; so that the testimony is that of two witnesses combining together to give evidence, and not that of a single party furnishing a single affirmation. Had S. Paul said, 'the Spirit itself beareth witness to our spirit,' the language would have assumed a widely different character There would then have been but a single witness, namely,

the Divine Spirit; and the human would have been only the recipient of testimony. And had this been the statement we could scarcely have rescued S. Paul from the charge of enthusiasm. The enthusiast might then have told us that the Apostle spoke of a witness given by the Spirit of God to the spirit of man, a witness, therefore, which, by its very nature, must be secret and incomprehensible. The man might have gone on to plead for special manifestations, raptures, and intimations, and have rested all his hopes of immortality on evidence which sprang only from a fervid imagination. But there is no excuse for doing this while the witness of the Spirit, according to S. Paul, is a witness with our own spirit, not to our own spirit; and while, according to S. John, in our text, the evidence of God's dwelling in us is limited to those who are keeping His commandments.

I should like you to be clear as to the difference of God's Spirit witnessing with our spirit, and God's Spirit witnessing to our spirit. For instance, I might receive a strong impression through a dream: a supernatural communication might seem made to me in visions of the night, and I might awake with a deep and comforting persuasion that God had pardoned all my sins and would admit me at death into the light of His presence. And we are far enough from saying that the persuasion thus derived from a dream must necessarily be deceitful, that God would never take such a mode of ministering to a man's spiritual comfort. But could the testimony thus afforded me, allowing it to be all that it seems, could it be regarded as that witness of the Spirit which is meant by the words we have quoted from S. Paul? If I had for years been staggered by those words, and harassed by doubts whether I belonged to God's family, because I could not find the Spirit's witness of my adoption, should I be warranted in thinking that the wanting evidence was supplied by this vision, and that I might now therefore be satisfied that I was indeed a child of God? We cannot admit this. The vision might be a witness of God's Spirit to my spirit: but certainly it could not be the witness of God's Spirit with my spirit. Undoubtedly my spirit bears no witness in this matter: it yields no testimony however much it may receive; and if the testimony lie in the dream, it is manifest enough that my spirit is in no sense the author of the dream, and, therefore, in no sense, the author of the testimony. So that whatever gladness it may make me feel, and however delightful and permanent the impressions which it may impart of my adoption, I could have no right to refer to what had passed as proving, in my own case, the truth, that 'the Spirit of God beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

II. And, of course, what we have affirmed in regard of the dream may be equally affirmed in regard of any of those secret suggestions,

those sudden emotions, those enraptured feelings, with which many would identify the testimony of the Spirit. We ask the individual on what he bases his assurance that he shall enter heaven when he dies? He tells us of the sweet sense which he enjoys of pardon and favour; he tells us of the privileges of the elect, that they cannot perish, neither fail of happiness at last. He tells us of foretastes vouchsafed him of future blessedness, and which amount to pledges of immortality. But he may speak quite truly. He may have a sweet sense of pardon, a thorough belief in the doctrine of election, and anticipate the joys which are in store for the faithful. I neither deny nor depreciate the tokens of adoption which he may thus reckon up as treasures in his experience. But, as yet, I say, there is nothing which we can receive as that witness of the Spirit which is spoken of by S. John. He has as yet brought nothing forward by which he can show that his own and God's Spirit combine in its production; nothing which identifies himself with keeping God's commandments. So that, without charging with deceitfulness other kinds of evidence, without resolving into mere enthusiasm the sensations and persuasions from which a man may be deriving much of his comfort, we have a right to ask from every one who thinks himself God's child some witness which may be subjected to rigid investigation. We say some witness which may be subjected to rigid investigation; for any which eludes the grasp of inquiry, which is too delicate to be handled, and too ethereal to be reasoned upon, and too private to be exposed to the observation of others, cannot be the joint witnessing of God's Spirit and man's, and cannot be that evidence of God's abiding in us, which is derived from, or associated with, our keeping God's commandments. And, however anxious we may be that you should have all those enjoyments which ought to spring from a well-founded hope of salvation, we bid you recollect that we are yet more anxious that none of you should deceive yourselves, 'speaking peace to the soul where there is no peace.' We wish that those in whose breast the Spirit is witnessing—the witness spoken of in our text—may be led to the full assurance of salvation; but we wish, with yet greater intenseness, that all those who may be resolving the Spirit's testimony into something secret, and mystical, and indefinite—an impulse, a whisper, a communication of which they can give no account, and furnish no evidence—we wish, we say, with yet greater intenseness, that these may be taught to put away the wild and unwarranted opinion, and to feel that, with regard to the witness of the Holy Ghost, it is the very groundwork of assurance, that they should be ready, according to S. Peter's admonition, to 'give to every man that asketh them a reason for the hope that is in them.' Study our text: see how it connects the keeping God's commandments with the

having the Spirit of God dwelling in us. Remember that there can be nothing of mystical, nothing of indescribable emotion in keeping the commandments; and you can hardly fail to perceive, that unless an individual can give us an account of the grounds of his assurance, an account, that is, which may be thoroughly scrutinised and probed, and examined—oh, he may dwell with much apparent delight on his inward sense of acceptance, on his conviction that he is predestined to life, and on the rapturous feelings which he often enjoys—he has not yet furnished any Scriptural evidence of adoption, for he has not made good his right to say with S. John in our text, 'And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.'

III. Having thus shown you what the witness of the Spirit is not, let us go on to consider what it is. The question is, simply, in what way God's Spirit, as saith S. Paul, 'beareth witness with our spirit,' can let us know that God abideth in us; in other words, can afford us evidence of our adoption into the heavenly family. Now we have no hesitation as to the answer to be given to this question. We believe our text to be in exact harmony with those many passages of Scripture which represent holiness—for holiness is the keeping God's commandments—as the alone sufficient proof of acceptance. You cannot require us to refer to well-known portions of the Bible which insist on the worthlessness of any faith which does not influence the life, and which forbid a man to suppose himself safe for eternity, except on clear evidence of his being 'a new creature.' There is no truth more prominently set forth by the inspired writers, none which is more woven into the very heart of the Christian system than that there must be renewal of nature, a thorough moral change in every one who gains entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. 'There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.' And the alone individual—if we may depend on the statement of Scripture—who has warrant for reckoning himself pardoned and accepted through Christ is the individual who can trace such a revolution in his whole bias, as that he can appeal to it as demonstrative that he has been 'born again of an incorruptible seed.' But what we now contend for is, that there is no variation between the representation thus given of the evidence which proves belief in Christ and that furnished by the words which form our subject of discourse. We contend that the individual, who may not be able to make good his title to immortality on the evidence of an altered life, and a continued sanctification, has no right to shield himself, on the authority of our text, under another kind of witness, and that a secret and indescribable, as though God abiding in us—which is what His Spirit makes us know—not altogether an inward and hidden thing, but necessarily made visible in our

No; from religion, from God. The excuse is generally the pressure of housekeeping, the wishes of the husband, the care of the children.

II. Do not misunderstand me and think that a married woman can give as much time to church work as before; no, but there are certain duties of overwhelming obligation, which must not be relaxed, especially Sunday duties, the Celebration, and the Morning Service, at least. This will hardly interfere with housekeeping; but husband's wishes and children? Perhaps it would be as wise to consider their souls as well as their pleasure. Their souls' eternity may depend on your decision.

III. The beauty of a religious married life, a type of everything holy, of the Holy Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Church; but married life without God, how dreadful! Its solemn obligations, its tremendous responsibilities, the accurate account to be given one day of your stewardship!

We are told that if we put any person before Christ, we cannot be His disciple. Holy Matrimony is a sacrament instituted by God, not a mere natural union of two persons bound together by ties of earthly love. Its duties and responsibilities are great, and need God's continual grace for their fulfilment. Who is the more likely to fulfil them, to be the best wife and mother? The woman who recognises the claims of God and religion, or the woman who has no higher aim than the things of this world?

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Duty of Woman to Women.

And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. . . . And Deborah said unto Barak, Up, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand. JUDGES iv. 4, 14.

I. E have now reached a point in the social progress of this age when it is necessary that we should every one of us recognise the crisis that is upon us. It is a transition-period from the old state of labour for men and domesticity for women, to a period in which there must be found labour for women as well as for men. A much larger number of women must hereafter support themselves than have ever done so before. When some have married, and others have devoted themselves to education, and others to domestic service, there still remain large numbers of women who are utterly unprovided for. How shall they be provided for? The East, as you

know, has answered that question by the institution of polygamy, which provides a nominal protection to a number of women most of whom are in fact simply servants of various grades and duties. The West has provided for it, at any rate in the Roman Communion, as in France and elsewhere, by the convent. Mr. Bloomfield, in his interesting work on Brittany, states that 'the reason which oftentimes fills the convents of that country is poverty, not religion. A man has a large family of daughters; what is he to do with them? Marriage is less easy in France than in England, *i.e.* marriage without fortune.' A woman must have her *dot*, and the commercial negotiation in connection with a French marriage is often the most serious part of the whole affair. But what if there is no dowry to settle—no *dot* to transfer? Something must be done. 'The convent offers itself; if he can only get them in there, they are provided for life. There is an end of them. Thus reasons parental love, tinctured with prudence and embittered by many cares.'

But, as I need not remind you, neither of these two resources is open to us. What our women ask is rather that we shall so widen the sphere of woman that whatever work she can do modestly and well she shall be permitted and encouraged to attempt.

II. Observe I say not merely well, but modestly. There are some callings from which, as it seems to me, women must for ever remain shut out. Any calling which requires conspicuous publicity, masculine activities, and out-door leadership, is not, I venture to submit, for a woman. For one I should not care to see her hanging from a yard-arm, driving a steam-engine, digging in a coal mine, or vociferating in parliament. But when we have eliminated from the question those occupations from which healthy self-respect would restrain any really womanly woman, there remain a vast range of employments on which women have not yet entered, but for which, nevertheless, they have singular and supreme qualifications. Why should we deny any modest calling or handicraft, whether behind the counter or in the workshop, to those whose maintenance and happiness would both alike be found in its pursuit? To this question there is really no answer. Unless we claim that men are a superior caste whose vocations must not be profaned by the entrance upon them of women, there is really no option for us but to proclaim the freedom of labour, and to contend for that freedom until it shall become complete and universal.

III. But there is a much neglected calling which appeals to women almost more urgently than any other. It is that calling which I best define by calling it the duty of woman to women. It is time that every woman among us, and especially every young girl with culture and influence and social power, should awaken to the needs of her

own sex. What Deborah was under the palm-tree at Mount Ephraim every brave and true-hearted woman is called to be in the service of as holy a cause and as precious interests. We call Deborah a prophetess, and so she was. We regard her as somehow separated by her rare natural endowments and her exceptional inspiration from the other women of her time, and so she was. But in a very real and a very living and lofty sense every woman is a prophetess, with a prophet's gifts and a prophet's calling. For what are prophets' gifts but that divine insight, that swift and heaven-born intuition which is your rarest gift, your loftiest endowment? It is our province who are men to reach a consciousness of wrongs to be righted and evils to be remedied by the slower process of reasoning. It is yours to see those wrongs with the more penetrating vision of an often unerring insight, and, not infrequently, long before men have been awakened to them to burn with a sense of their oppression and their injustice.

It is only by widening the range of our vision and by coming in contact with sorrows and wants and perplexities other than our own that we can win the right spirit in which to discharge the duties that lie nearest to us. I turn to that Master whose footsteps, whatever human allegiance may come to be ours, we are supremely called to follow, and nothing is more profoundly characteristic of Him than the breadth of His sympathies for all, and their especial courageousness and explicitness in the interests of woman. He emancipates her, in one instance, from legal thraldom, in another from hereditary disabilities, in another from social exile, in another from masculine contempt. His words to one who came to Him merely for the healing of the body, 'Woman, thou art loosed,' are the key to every one of His acts and utterances toward the whole sex. Those acts and utterances are best described by the one word 'liberation,' and freedom, freedom from the servitude of a despised inferiority, and the degrading relation of a chattel or a toy is the whole spirit of His gospel.

H. C. POTTER.

The Defence and Example of Jael.

Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail from the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. JUDGES iv. 21.

THE narrative of which these words are a part has been read to you in the first lesson of this morning's service. Perhaps as you listened to it, as you heard of Sisera fleeing for his life from the field of battle and seeking shelter in the tent of Jael, and then of Jael as receiving the fugitive with open arms, and performing towards

him all the offices of hospitality, and when, confiding in her honour, he had fallen fast asleep, and she advancing in the manner described in our text, and murdering—ay, murdering her slumbering guest—I say when you heard that, then probably your feeling was, What a frightful crime! what a monster of a woman! But if you were to go on to read the next chapter, the first lesson of this evening's service in which the prophetess Deborah records in inspired strains the overthrow of Sisera, you would find a very different judgment passed on Jael. Thus it is that she is spoken of: 'Blessed among women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent.' And then the prophetess proceeds to pass a strong encomium on this very part of Jael's conduct which would appear to us most atrocious and revolting: 'He asked water and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish.' There is a great difference, then, between the judgment which we should form of Jael and that delivered and recorded by the Spirit of God. She cannot have been the atrocious and sanguinary wretch which we should naturally suppose. She is praised and honoured in Scripture, and it behoves us to take heed how we heap on her our censure.

This, however, is a great subject of discourse; Jael appears to us the hateful murderess; our feeling towards her is one of horror and indignation. Yet in the Bible she is extolled as amongst the noblest of heroes. Her apparent subtle kindness towards her too confiding guest; her taking the hammer and the nail, these are applauded, and that by one whom God's Spirit moved to lofty utterances. Surely there is much here which requires us to examine and explain. Come, then, let us see what defence may be made for Jael, how she may not only be acquitted of crime, but held as deserving of encomium in driving the 'nail into the temple of Sisera, and fastening it to the ground.'

Now, there are other cases in the Bible not altogether dissimilar to this, cases in which, what appears to us as a crime, are those in which the divine approval has been unequivocally expressed. It is thus in reference to Abraham when he offered up Isaac. We shrink from a father offering his son, but the voice of the Almighty proclaims him blessed for the deed. Thus again in the case of Rahab. We are ready to look with abhorrence on the woman who could betray her country; but the Apostle of Christ has classed her among the worthies whom all ages should honour. We may refer, moreover, to the wars of the Jews and the Canaanites. There is something very revolting in that indiscriminate slaughter by which they were characterised. The not sparing even the infant suckling appears to us a barbarity that would have utterly disgraced the most savage tribes; but you find there was divine sanction for that which has the aspect of the

most cruel and sanguinary proceedings. Thus again, as we have already hinted, in place of perpetrating an act of great wickedness, Jael performed a most praiseworthy act in killing the man whom she had offered to protect. The deed obtained for her the most marked approbation, and that too from God Himself, speaking by the mouth of His prophetess Deborah. Now, such cases as these are well deserving your inquiry and attention. Indeed it is of the first importance that we should search out a satisfactory account of what appears at variance with the known character of God, representing Him as countenancing or approving what is morally wrong. This is no point of nice and curious speculation; for if the Bible really depict God as giving His sanction to crimes, we can no longer receive it as undeniably His word. Of course our attention must be chiefly fixed on the particular case of Jael and Sisera; but we may endeavour to take occasion to glance, in the way of illustration, at similar instances to which we have referred; whilst much that we shall advance will be generally applicable, and may therefore easily be transferred to any case which needs explanation. At present, therefore, let us confine ourselves to the history brought before us by the lessons for the day, examining, in the first place, what Jael did, and then endeavouring, in the second place, to vindicate her conduct.

I. Now, the facts are but few, and have already been adverted to in these introductory remarks. It appears that Jael was the wife of Heber the Kenite, and of Heber you are told that he was of the children of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses. There was something in the ancestral connection between the family of Jael and the children of Israel to make it an occasion to receive Sisera; but notwithstanding this connection, it does not appear that Hobab took part with the Israelites, for the Lord had at this time sold the Israelites for their iniquities over to Jabin, king of Canaan, whereas it is said 'there was peace between Jabin and the house of Heber the Kenite.' Undoubtedly it was on this account that Sisera directed his steps to the tent of Jael, calculating on protection from one who was in alliance with his sovereign. And this aggravates what we may be disposed to consider as the treachery of Jael. It was not merely an act of hospitality that was required by Sisera, but that she should shield him from his pursuers. Moreover, the circumstances of Sisera could hardly fail to excite the commiseration of Jael. There is always something very melancholy and touching in great and sudden reverses. Men who are not ordinarily distinguished by compassion can scarcely avoid feeling it when they see the prosperous spoiled in a moment of all their possessions. In the morning Sisera had an immense army under his command, with nine hundred chariots of iron. Now he is approaching Jael's tent, a lonely fugitive, fainting

from toil, and pursued by inveterate foes. She comes out to meet him; she does not wait till he has proffered a petition for shelter; she welcomes him into her tent, 'Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not.' Thus encouraged and assured of at least such protection as Jael could afford, Sisera entered the tent of Jael; and she covered him with a mantle, either that he might repose in greater comfort or be concealed from his pursuers. He then asked for water that he might slake his thirst, but Jael, studious, as it would seem, in showing every kindness to her guest, opened a bottle of milk and gave to drink to the exhausted warrior. He then requires her to stand at the door of the tent, and if any man came to inquire whether there was a man there, she was to answer him, No. It is very observable that we are not told that Jael agreed to do this; she makes no reply. Sisera distinctly asked her to tell a lie in his cause, but the silence of Jael rather indicates that her reverence for truth would not allow her to do this.

And now comes the startling part of the narrative. Hitherto we have seen Jael as the hospitable woman, anxious to do all in her power for one oppressed by calamity and encompassed by danger. She has acted as we should have expected any one to act who possessed the common feelings of humanity; and more especially a woman, in whom we naturally look for a greater measure of tenderness and sympathy. But now is she suddenly changed. Placing confidence in the fidelity of Jael, having no suspicion of treachery, and quite overcome with fatigue, Sisera had sunk into a deep sleep, forgetting for a while his disasters and his perils. Does Jael watch him as his guardian? Is she looking out from the tent that she may descry the pursuers, and if possible divert them from the chase? You would have expected something of this kind from her previous conduct; but in place of this we behold her approaching with the stealthy step of the assassin. Her guest is before her, buried in profound slumbers, the man to whom she had offered protection, who had confided in her, and who by his very sleep threw himself more unreservedly on her guardianship. Can she abuse his confidence, can she be his murderer after having pledged herself to his safety? It is even so. This Jael, this woman who had just before exhibited, as it seemed, all the gentleness of a woman's heart, approaches with noiseless tread the slumbering warrior, a nail in one hand and a hammer in the other, as though she had been practised in the dark trade of the assassin. She drives the nail into his temple, and that too with such force that it is fastened into the ground. Having thus murdered her guest she hastened to the tent door that she might publish the exploit, and when she beheld Barak approach, eager in pursuing Sisera, she ran to meet him like a heroine glorying in her

triumph, hurried him to the scene of assassination, and as though longing in place of shunning to look on her victim, exclaiming, 'Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest.'

Such are the facts of the narrative, which make up, as you will say, as foul and bloody a tragedy as was ever acted on this theatre of crime. And yet the prophetess, a person speaking by the Spirit of Almighty God, declares, 'Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent.'

II. The question now is, What vindication can be offered for the conduct of Jael? How can we prove it consistent with what is known of the character of God, that He should pronounce this woman blessed whilst her hands are red with the blood of one who had committed himself to her promised protection? We will use no special pleading. If Jael received Sisera into her tent with the intention of murdering him, she must be left to the execrations of posterity. But there are, we think, plain and straightforward reasons from which to infer that Jael had no design of killing Sisera, that she acted therefore with perfect honesty, and not with atrocious duplicity, when she offered him shelter. What likelihood is there that Jael proposed to murder Sisera? He was not her enemy, for there was peace between her husband's family and the Canaanites, she had nothing to gain by his death; and if she had, she needed only to refuse him a shelter. The enemy was in pursuit, and would quickly have overtaken the fugitive. Had she wished his death ever so much, she had nothing more to do than to leave him to his fate. He was a doomed man, and there was no necessity that she should endanger herself to ensure his destruction; for let it be well observed that the killing of Sisera was a most dangerous undertaking for a lonely woman. I do not know that in all the annals of daring achievement you can find a bolder action. Sisera was perhaps the greatest warrior of his country, renowned far and wide for courage and success. Shall she endeavour to entrap this man, one whom danger might render suspicious as well as desperate, and thus run the risk of exposing herself to the violence of his revenge? Besides, if she succeeded so far as to engage his confidence, could she venture to attack him even in his sleep? The almost certainty was, that the moment the nail touched his forehead, before she could strike the blow, or at least such a blow as would be fatal, Sisera would awake, and starting suddenly up, seize the arm of the assassin and deal the death intended for himself. It would take much to make me believe that Jael, whatever her intrepidity, or whatever her bloodthirstiness, purposed the committing of such an action when she asked Sisera into her tent. The action was too perilous; it required too much of more than masculine hardihood, or rather ferocity, even if there had been the strongest inducements;

whereas there appears to have been no inducement at all, but rather the reverse; and we add to this, that since you have only the silence of Jael when she was asked by Sisera to tell a lie in his cause, the probability is that she had a reverence for truth, and if so, she must have meant what she said when she gave the invitation and the promise, 'Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not.'

It is then in the highest degree improbable that there was anything of premeditated treachery on the part of Jael, and we make a long advance towards vindicating Jael if we find reasons for supposing that she acted honestly and uprightly in inviting Sisera into her tent. It is one of the most repulsive things in her conduct, on any other supposition, that she came forth with the look and the voice of friendship to meet the distressed fugitive; and that she was most officious to him in performing the rites of hospitality, while all the while she designed to stain her hands in his blood, and only watched an opportunity for completing her murderous project. This, as we endeavoured to show you, you have no right to charge on Jael; the probabilities seem all the other way; and we believe that, whatever account may be given of her subsequent conduct, the only candid construction to put on this part of the narrative is that Jael was thoroughly sincere in offering an asylum to Sisera, that it was not with the language of deceit, nor in order to cloak a bloody purpose, but simply in truthfulness of heart, and with the earnest desire of succouring a distressed man, that she invited the fugitive into her tent, covered him with a mantle, and refreshed him with milk.

'Nevertheless,' you will say, 'she killed Sisera; whether premeditated or not, the murder was committed. What is to be urged in extenuation of so barbarous a deed?' This brings us to examine by what motives Jael was instigated, or on what principles she acted in putting to death her slumbering guest. We reckon it a satisfactory explanation of her conduct, and one which removes every difficulty, that she was led by a divine impulse, or in obedience to a divine command to take away Sisera's life. It is true that we are not told, as we are in the case of Abraham, that God commanded the action, which, without such command, would have been immeasurably criminal; but we are clearly told that God approved the action. And since the action in itself, irrespective of His command, would have been a flagrant offence, we necessarily infer that what He approved He had also directed. We find Deborah saying to Barak, when he hesitated to go out to battle with the Canaanites, 'Notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour, for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hands of a woman.' It is evident therefore that God had not only fixed the destruction of Sisera, but the exact mode in which that destruction should be

effected. The faithlessness or hesitation of Barak was to be punished by the employment of a woman in performing the great work of delivering Israel. When you combine this announced determination of God that Sisera should fall by a female hand with the approbation expressed of the conduct of Jael, we know not what conclusion you can form except that Jael acted by a divine commission, not from revenge or covetousness or cruelty, but altogether in obedience to an impulse or precept which she knew to be from above. She had probably acted from her natural feeling when offering shelter to the fugitive, and giving most hospitable entertainment. We only think it a kindly part that she should go out to meet Sisera in his distress, and endeavour to shield him from further injury; but when the deep slumber was on him there came an intimation to Jael—I cannot tell you how conveyed, but certainly in such a manner as that there could be no doubt of its origin—an intimation from God that her guest must die, and that too by her hand. And if such were the case, again we remind you that nothing but a divine command will explain a divine approval. If such were the case, we challenge you to find in all the annals of Scripture a mightier display of the power of faith than was exhibited by Jael.

III. We have laboured to show that Jael was no atrocious or bloodthirsty woman, but the intrepid and faithful servant of God, who shrank not from performing the divine will, even when it required her to take the life of another at the imminent peril of her own. And now having vindicated Jael, we shall not hesitate to go further, and hold her forth as an example which it should be your endeavour to imitate. We do not merely mean that having displayed strong faith, and obeyed the law, when obedience was beyond measure difficult, she has left a pattern to be followed by all who are summoned to special difficulties and sacrifices in the service of God; over and above this the case of Jael and Sisera has a peculiar similarity to many—yea, even all amongst yourselves, who are required by God to inflict death where they have offered hospitality. Just consider that Jael was the friend of Sisera, and ought to have been his enemy. There should have been no peace between the Kenites and the oppressors of Israel. The foes of that people should have been also the foes of the kinsmen of Moses, and therefore Jael had received into her tent, and had entertained, one with whom it was wrong that she should be in alliance. She was bidden indeed to smite a companion, but a companion whom she ought long before to have shunned as an adversary. Is there no resemblance in this to our own circumstances and conduct? We ought to be at war with evil passions, with carnal desires, with sinful associates; but in place of being at war, is it not true that we make a league or strike an intimacy? that we

offer hospitality where we ought to draw the sword? Is it not, therefore, yet further true that the very thing which God demanded from Jael He demands also from us, namely, that we smite that with which we are unlawfully at peace, and which is sleeping, as it were, under the very wings of our protection? Yea, if it be the Scriptural demand that we 'crucify,'—'crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts,' oh, then, there is a vast similarity between our own case and that of Jael. We too must put to death the enemy whom we have cherished and received. We too must determine that we will act the executioner where we have been the patron and the host. We too must be ready to strike down that which we have embraced, and pierce that which we have admitted not only into the tent but into the heart. And therefore is Jael a great example to us as she resolutely approaches the sleeping Sisera, as she adjusts the nail, as she lifts the hammer, and destroys her guest. She does but represent to us how, in the power of faith and in dependence on God, we too should deal with favourite habits, cherished associations, and desired objects, whensoever it can be proved that there is peace where there ought to have been war. I counsel you then that you regard not the history which we have been engaged in reviewing as merely a strange narrative of heroism if not of crime, as but commemorating a bloody deed and a tragic occurrence. There is a Sisera in your own dwellings; there is an enemy with whom you have made a league; and whether it be a corrupt passion, a sinful compliance, a worldly practice, or a carnal pursuit, we demand from you the hammer and the nail, and tell you that to spare the foe is to kill yourselves. We ask from you the faith of Jael; we will hear nothing of the greatness of the effort, nothing of the peril, nothing of the close ties which bind you to the object. You cannot have as much to plead why you should not proceed to extremes with this or that opponent of salvation as Jael had why she should not smite Sisera. If Christ require the 'cutting off the right hand, or the plucking out of the right eye,' whensoever it is an occasion of offence, it is manifest that the process of destruction is not to be arrested by the closeness of the connection with that which God's word hath devoted unto death. The avenger of blood will be suddenly upon us, just as Barak was suddenly at the tent-door of Jael; and if it shall appear that we have sheltered God's enemy, that we have spared the life when commanded to destroy, that we have shrunk from 'driving the nail into the temples' because of the league between ourselves and our guest, oh, then, we can only expect to be dealt with as Jael might have been dealt with had she refused to kill Sisera when bidden of her God. There is a curse pronounced in a subsequent part of her history, as well as a blessing, on Jael, whose justice it has been one of our chief objects to establish. There is a curse on

those who refuse to kill the adversaries of the Lord, or who neglect to take part in their destruction: 'Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' Now such a curse, such a bitter curse, must all of us feel if we be not bold in endeavouring to exterminate the evil which has made its home in our hearts. But let there be this boldness, 'the hammer and the nail,' sparing not an attachment because it is cherished, nor an affection because it is dear, if it withhold you from God. Let there be this boldness, 'the hammer and the nail,' and over you shall be divinely breathed words resembling those which were breathed over Jael as she drove the nail into Sisera's temples, 'Blessed above women in the tent.'

H. MELVILL.

V OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

God the Sole Delight of the Elect.

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. PSALM lxxiii. 24.

I. THIS psalm gives the embodiment of the deepest, innermost, and most primary life of the soul; where thought is not, but the life is reduced to the ultimate facts of spiritual consciousness, the certain premises of all spiritual thought, the knowledge of self and the knowledge of God. The psalmist begins with wider thoughts than he ends—thoughts about the world and the Church, and God's dealings with both; and with doubts and difficulties that beset the faithful in the attempt to understand His providence. He begins by the confession, 'Truly God is loving unto Israel, even unto such as are of a clean heart.' His thought narrows its range as he goes on, but rises as it narrows, and becomes more intense as it becomes more personal. The soul that aspires to contemplate the ways of Providence is met by a difficulty at the outset: God's ways are not as our ways, His gifts to men are not proportioned as we should have proportioned them, to their deserts. And this difficulty, which is stated in the beginning of the psalm, is not solved, in a final and universal way, in any part of it; it is solved only to the

satisfaction of the psalmist himself, with just the hint at the intellectual solution, that God's judgment in the world to come will remedy what now seem to be its defects. Except for this hint the problem of the world is dismissed and forgotten; it finds its solution not in thought but in an intuition, 'Then thought I to understand this, but it was too hard for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God.'

The world is only understood by being forgotten; and when it is understood it is forgotten again. When the question of God's just government has once been satisfactorily explained, the soul cares no more for the details of the explanation; she only desires to prostrate herself before Him and confess her weakness and His surpassing glory. 'Thus my heart was grieved and it went even through my reins; so foolish was I, and ignorant, even as it were a beast before Thee.' But in communion with Him, even such unequal communion as she feels to be the best she deserves, she is strengthened and ennobled, and rests and is comforted. 'Nevertheless, I am alway by Thee; for Thou hast holden me by my right hand.' In this sublime selfishness, if we are to call it so, he is content to stay; he forgets all others. He forgets those who had caused his trouble—the ungodly and the wicked, the corrupt and the blasphemers; he forgets also, for the moment, those whose remembrance had saved him from his own weakness and temptation—the generation of God's own children. He feels himself and his God alone together—alone, as though they were the only two beings in the world; and in his one God he takes his solitary delight; to him God is all in all, both in life and after death. 'Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory.'

But it is not the glory that he desires; he says to God, 'I seek not Thine but Thee'; 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee?' heaven itself, the abode of bliss, the place where there is no danger, no trouble, and above all no sin; where all tears are wiped away from all faces, where there is fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore—all this contains nothing to delight him but one thing—the presence of God. If God is with him, he is happy, even without heaven; it is enough to feel God's right hand upholding him, to know that He is always by him, and while this is allowed him he is content to remain on this imperfect earth. He can do without the glory until God's own time shall come for giving it; the guidance of God's counsel may last as long as He shall please, so that only it be not taken away. But even in glory he could not do without God's presence.

II. That this is the real source and nature of the happiness of the blessed, that they delight not in heaven but in God, we find to be plainly the doctrine of Scripture, both as being expressly contained in some passages, such as this, and as plainly being implied in or

following from others. Indeed it seems almost necessary and self-evident, as a matter (if one may dare to use the term in so high a subject) of common-sense. God, if He be infinitely above all His creatures, must be an infinitely worthier object of desire, an infinitely richer source of bliss, than any of them. But yet men find it pleasanter and easier to look for other kinds of happiness than this; and the fact admits of but one explanation, that we have not enough love to God to find all our happiness in Him only. Now, while the fact remains so, we shall not mend it by professions of more love than we feel; we must acknowledge our own defect. Only, let us not acquiesce in it; let us recognise how great a defect it is. Until we are able to have nothing and desire nothing but God, we are not fit for heaven. If we would have the happiness that we seek, we must receive it in God's form, and seek it in His way, by disinterested love for Him and our brethren, not schemes for our own personal exaltation even in things spiritual. If we have other desires that compete with the desire for God, let us confess it, but confess it as a sin, or at best a weakness. 'O Lord our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us; but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name.' That must be the confession of a soul that feels itself to care more for God's gifts, even the best, than for Himself; he does not love God enough, and therefore he must learn, he knows, to love Him more. No doubt, our power of loving is weak and cold, but He will Himself strengthen it in answer to prayer. We learn that we have need to pray that we may desire that which God doth promise, as well as that we may love the thing which He commandeth; but if we grow in love and continue in prayer, we shall come to desire it. What we have to do is to go out of ourselves, not out into the world but into God; to leave a self-centred selfish desire for happiness, and seek His will and His kingdom; only by that the truest happiness will be found.

W. H. SIMCOX.

The Reconciling Power of Christianity.

For perhaps he therefore departed (or was parted from thee) for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever. PHILEMON 15.

I. WE see here first of all what sort of results S. Paul expected to flow from the reconciling and combining power of the Christian faith. 'Perhaps he, therefore, was parted from thee for a season, that thou mightest receive him for ever.' In nothing does Christianity differ more profoundly from some of the philosophies which seem to have a superficial resemblance to it than in this: it does not

allow a man to think of himself as an isolated unit, while forgetful of other men; it does not allow a class to entrench itself in its privileges or in its excellencies, and to ignore the claims of other classes around it; it does not allow a race to stiffen itself in its prejudices, and to forget that men of other races are also members of the human family, and have gifts and endowments that are all their own. What was Onesimus? He was two things which seemed to place him beyond the range of respectable sympathies: he was a felon, and he was a slave. Onesimus was a felon, and S. Paul—he by birth was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; he belonged to a class which would not willingly soil its robes by the lightest contact with a sinner. Recollect that scene in the house of Simon when the Magdalene washed the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ. Often must S. Paul have found it hard to repress with a strong hand the rising prejudices of his early years, especially when face to face with a runaway thief like Onesimus. But in S. Paul the spirit of the Pharisee had been expelled; it had been killed by the spirit of the Christian. He knew that he too was a sinner who could not hope to face the judgment of God unless he were covered by the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. He knew that he himself owed everything to the love which had come down from heaven and which had died on Calvary. What, then, was the real difference between himself and Onesimus? It was merely that the one had found the pardoning love of the divine Redeemer, and the other had not yet found it.

The Christian master would feel that the slave was certainly, as a man, his equal, and possibly, in the kingdom of the Redeemer, his superior, and that he, too, the while, had a Master in heaven, and the Christian slave would feel that the circumstances of this life mattered little if, through the divine redemption, he were secure of the next; and he would see in his master's will, wherever he could, nothing less than the will of God. The Apostles then would not anticipate the slow but certain action of the Christian principle upon society, the infiltration of the Christian spirit into the imperial codes, the gradual legislation of the great Catholic councils, the work which, too long delayed, is associated in our later days with the honoured names of Wilberforce and Clarkson. When Philemon received Onesimus, the great Christian enterprise of reconciling classes had, indeed, begun. What are we doing to further it?

II. And we may note, secondly, how entirely for the time being S. Paul's interest is concentrated on a single soul. He writes just as though there was no person in the world to think about except Onesimus, and relatively to Onesimus his master Philemon. 'Perhaps he therefore was parted from thee for a season, that thou mightest receive him for ever.'

Men commonly begin work with details, then they ascend to general principles; they begin with individuals, and when they go on to influence classes and bodies of men, and in this world of large, abstract thoughts and efforts, they not merely lack time for the detail work—the work with which they began life—but they not seldom lose the secret of doing it. This, then, is so admirable here in S. Paul that, with a burden of speculative thought and of practical anxiety upon him in the very largest scale, he yet finds time in his Roman prison to devote himself to the instruction and conversion of a poor slave, to the enlightening of his understanding, to the touching of his heart with the story of the divine redemption, just as if he, S. Paul, had nothing else in the world to do.

Many a teacher of two or three children, a few pupils, who seem dull and irresponsive and little likely to do their instructor credit—many a teacher is often tempted to wish that he had what is called a larger sphere of action, where he might control great issues and become a leader or a fashioner of the thought of the time. If any such one hears me let him think of S. Paul, the aged Apostle of the nations, working away as the dreary hours passed—working away on the dull brain and sluggish affections of the slave Onesimus. The world, it has been well said—the world is not saved by abstract ideas, however brilliant; the world is saved by the courageous, individualising efforts of Christian love.

III. And thirdly and lastly, let us note here how a Christian should look at the events of life, at the commonplace and trivial events as well as at those which appear to be striking and important. Every such event has a purpose, whether we can trace it out or not; it has a purpose which will be made plain in the eternal world, in that mysterious state of existence which awaits every one of us when we have passed the gate of death. Onesimus did not rob Philemon, fly from Colosse, find out S. Paul at Rome, all for nothing. No. 'Perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou mightest receive him for ever.'

Now what is here remarkable is that even the misconduct of Onesimus seems to have been, according to S. Paul, permitted with a purpose which would be made plain in the future life.

Onesimus's theft and flight—that was a bit of moral evil; but it was overruled, first to his conversion and next to his reconciliation with his master, whose friend he thus became in time and in eternity. S. Paul will not now dwell on the evil in view of the good to which it leads. God knew what He was doing in permitting the misconduct of Onesimus. It was for Philemon to forget the petty and personal aspects of the case, to recognise God's hand and mind in it, to throw his thought forward and upward—forward from the present

to the future, upward from the little world of sense and time to the mighty world with its immense proportions of eternity.

H. P. LIDDON.

A Missionary Sermon.

And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and are gone away, and what have I more? and how then say ye unto me, What aileth thee? JUDGES xviii. 24.

SUCH was the pathetic complaint of the idolatrous Jew in the days when there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes. He had come to his home and found it stripped of all that he had been wont to rely on for help and guidance in his life; and when he has gone in pursuit, and the depredators with affected surprise ask what ails him, he feels as if the question were a cruel mockery, an adding of insult to injury, to have taken away all he valued most in the world, and then turn and ask with such utter nonchalance what ailed him. 'Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and what have I more?'

Do we consider that a man situated as this man was a fit object of pity and sympathy or not?

The stern, uncompromising iconoclast would certainly say 'No.' He would feel that it was better for such an one to find out by bitter experience how vain and useless were the idols in which he trusted. In and through his desolation he might be brought to seek for help where alone it could be found.

The mild, tolerant student of comparative religion would probably say 'Yes.' He would urge on his behalf that (as a Frenchman has lately undertaken to show) at that particular point in the evolution of Jewish religion from its primitive worship of invisible forces, it was inevitable that the worshipper should seek to give concrete form and embodiment to the anthropomorphic idea of God, which was then being assimilated from the nations around. For such an one to be deprived of his idols was to be put out of *rapport* and correspondence with his religious environment, and as that meant spiritual death, he clearly deserves our pity in his destitution.

Turning, however, from the merely speculative interest which the ancient Israelite's case presents, I wish to transfer it, 'as in a figure,' to the very real and practical interest presented by the parallel situation of a large section of our fellow-subjects in India, and to endeavour to answer the question just raised by considering what our duty to them is. For in the main the plea of the Jew of Mount Ephraim is being echoed now either in unexpressed feeling or in

outspoken utterance by thousands of religious-minded Hindus in India. 'Ye have taken away my gods which I have made, and what have I more?' This plea is one the force of which my own work in India has so brought home to me, that I felt when asked to occupy this pulpit that my only justification in doing so would be that it would enable me, as a member of the first brotherhood of men sent out to India from the University, to articulate this plea by endeavouring to interpret its meaning, and to suggest its satisfaction. However it might be wished that the task had fallen to worthier hands, it would be wrong, I felt, to postpone the representation of India's great and urgent need, as well as of the unique opportunity now offered to our Church of satisfying that need, if she will recognise it and her duty towards it before it be too late.

I. It is quite wonderful to notice how India's need of the Gospel is being recognised on all sides and in the most unexpected quarters. The politician looks to the spread of Christianity as one great source of strength and stability for the permanence of British Empire. The educationalist looks to our native Christian women as at present the most hopeful means of making female education effective among the upper classes. The greatest living authority on Indian subjects has lately said, 'Christianity holds out advantages of social organisation not offered by Hinduism or Islam. It provides for the education and moral supervision of its people with a pastoral care which Islam, destitute of a regular priesthood, does not pretend to. It receives the new members into its body with a cordiality and a completeness to which Hinduism is a stranger. I believe,' he says, 'it is reserved for Christianity to develop the highest uses of Indian caste, "as a system of conservative socialism." . . . But it will be Indian caste humanised by a new spiritual life.'

Or to take one or two more specific cases. The tahsíldár or head native officer of a large country town appeals to a missionary to send a Christian teacher for a Hindu school, because he finds the Hindu teachers have yielded to the prevailing immorality of the town. The municipality of a large city in the Punjab appoints a native Christian minister its chairman because they can find no other man so high-minded and honest for the post. The only great modern religious reformer India has produced bore witness on his death-bed to India's need of Christ.

Quite as striking is the indirect testimony borne by the various movements and societies, sometimes friendly, more often antagonistic, which Christianity has to a great extent been the means of calling into existence. One such often referred to, the Arye Samáj, was avowedly founded to counteract the spread of Christianity, and to give a *locus standi* to young Hindus who have renounced orthodox

Hinduism, and were often found to be gravitating towards faith in Christ.

II. If, then, such is at present the expectant attitude, friendly or otherwise, towards Christianity, what is the special line of action which the Church needs to adopt if she is adequately to fulfil the expectations thus formed? Fifty years ago, any one regarding the work which the Church had to do in India might have been justified in maintaining that it would have to be for a long time mainly destructive. The seemingly impenetrable barriers of idolatry, caste, and custom seemed to bar the way to getting at the minds and hearts of the people till the barriers should be demolished. The preliminary work of clearing away such obstacles seemed a necessary preparation for sowing the seed of life. That such was and still is a part of her work no one will doubt. It is an enemy's land, and the pulling down of strongholds is a necessary operation. But what seems to call for special recognition as a changed aspect of the situation now is that other forces and influences are at work, unforeseen fifty years ago, which are of themselves carrying on with ever-increasing rapidity the work of demolition. Compared, indeed, with the whole mass of Hinduism, as represented by one hundred and fifty millions of Hindus, the amount that is actually demolished is but infinitesimal. But the disintegrating forces are at work, which must eventually, even without the aid of missionary agencies, destroy Hinduism as the creed of the educated classes. Mohammedanism will only at best be able to hold its own, and will have to put forth all her powers to do that. It is, then, let us not doubt but earnestly believe, the call, the manifest will of Providence, that the Church of Christ should fill the breach, the void, that is being made, and that by asserting her most characteristic, most essential function, even the power which her Lord has given her, not for destruction but for edification. Christ said He came not to destroy but to fulfil, to complete, to realise. Are not these the most critical, decisive words He ever uttered as to the character of His mission? Did not S. Paul express the same truth when, after describing the moral transformation of man by the Gospel, in the words, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away,' he added, as it were to prevent misconception, 'behold, they are become new.' The new life is the old life, the ideal life; conversion is, as has been said, the re-entrance of man into the first plan of God, for which he was made.

If it was right to speak of the appeal of the Israelite bereft of all he seemed to have to rely on for light and guidance as pathetic, even though it was in his case so ignorant, so unconscious of his true need, it cannot surely be wrong to speak of the appeal which India makes to-day as pathetic, as eloquent in its helplessness, just because it is so

ignorant, so unconscious, so helpless and hopeless in its vacancy, its poverty, its darkness. When the man of Macedonia stood before S. Paul that night in the vision, did not the pathos of the cry, 'Come over and help us,' arise from the very fact of its being the unconscious appeal of the heathen world for help? And if the response to that cry was the mission to Europe, which was the origin and cause of all that is highest and best and noblest in our life and thought here to-day, shall the Church's response to India's cry be less prompt, less devoted, less full of faith and hope and love, when she has that greatest of all examples to inspire and stimulate her, the experience of the power of the message he bore to support and guide her in her task—the certainty of final victory, not in our time but in God's time, to cheer and encourage her till Christ comes to claim the kingdom for His own? 'For this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.' 'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

S. S. ALLNUTT.

The Bruised Reed and the Smoking Flax.

He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. S. MATTHEW xii. 19, 20.

THESE characteristics of which the prophets spoke, and which the evangelist saw realised in Jesus Christ, are not only present in our Master's work, but also carry with them the promise of the power of wider and vaster influence. They may, as we shall see, be divided into three classes.

I. Here is quietness: 'He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets.' That indeed was characteristic of our Lord's method. In the very vicinity, so to speak, of this passage you see how He dealt, and dealt out His life, on that very principle. He healed with that lavish kindness which was His wont, but He suffered not those whom He healed to speak. He seemed to desire that He should do His work in quietness. He did not care, so to speak, to have His work advertised; but it was rather His desire to do good than to have the good done talked of. And so constantly did He seem not merely to do good by stealth, so to speak, but to fear that there should be anything like blatancy or noise respecting it. He went and hid Himself; He withdrew from the people; He cautioned them to tell no man the things that had been done, and to go home and give praise to God. When occasions came, which other personages might have used to their own advantage, Christ retired from the opportunities of greatness. Not only

did He withhold Himself, so to speak, from the crown which was about to be offered to Him, but He even rebuked the energy of the disciples which was ready to give force to the spirit of self-assertion. And that was exactly in harmony with His teaching. The conception of the kingdom of God which He came to establish did not depend upon ideas which men were accustomed to associate with it. Great temporal influence, physical force, the blare of trumpets and the flourish which accompanies all the world's great movements, were absolutely remote from the spirit and conception of His kingdom. He said in effect, The kingdom of God comes not with observation, and it is not in startling men's minds, and forcing itself upon them, that the kingdom of God will put forth energy; it is not the energy which is seen upon the surface, but at work beneath the surface; and so He said, 'The kingdom of God is within you.'

'He shall not strive, nor cry'; it is because He has directed His attention to the undercurrents of life, and He sees that the set of the sea is more than the waves, and the power of the wind is more than the storm.

II. And if thus on one side He showed simplicity and quietness in work, on the other side He showed tenderness. Here His method was adverse to that of the world. The world and the world-powers had accomplished their aims by ignoring the sorrows of men. Ambition and the necessities of the people demanded that they should make incursions into their neighbour's territory. The great progress of the world is carried on by means of ignoring absolutely the necessities and sorrows of others. There might indeed be many a little reed which was sounded in sweet simplicity in some village home that must be torn from the peasant's grasp and crushed under foot. How many songs were silenced by the progress of empires in the past? Christ says tenderness is to be the method by which He carries on His work.

Did He not become a Deliverer and a Saviour to make it impossible that anxiety should triumph, to make it impossible that your sorrows should withdraw your energy and usefulness from the world, to make it impossible that sin should paralyse your action? He deals not only in a spirit of tenderness, but with tenderness towards individuals, which was the highest wisdom towards the community.

III. And that leads me to the third point. There was His wisdom. It often happens in the history of the world that the very energy with which men pursue the good leads them to make mistakes.

The Master said, 'The bruised reed and the smoking flax shall not be destroyed.' When in eagerness the servant came and said, 'An enemy hath planted tares in your field,' His answer was, 'Let both grow together till the harvest'; and when He said it, He explained His reason. The Church has not understood—alas! often it has

entirely mistaken—its meaning. He said, 'Lest while ye pull up the tares ye root up also the wheat with them.'

All large wisdom is economical. It does not destroy energy in order that it may produce reformation. It remembers that there are powers in the world which may be in the present turned to evil, but may hereafter be turned to good, and that it is a pity to destroy that which may be useful hereafter. To say that a thing has been wrongly used is no argument for its destruction, it is every argument for its reformation, and therefore Christ seemed to say, 'I come into the world and I watch what men call mischiefs'; and did He not bring them out into power? The publican, the sinner, the world said, 'Crush them underfoot. What is she that she should dare invade the sacred precincts of the Pharisee's home?' Yet Christ welcomed the sinner, and went to be the guest of the publican, for He said of the former, 'The very passion which led her astray may have been the dawning of the passion which was capable of nobler things; instead of crushing it and letting it go as a thing of evil, I will reclaim it for the world.' He took that woman's heart, and He sanctified it, and she became the source of benediction. 'And the quickness and skill of mind which has shown itself in this man is a useful power, and I will bring Levi from the receipt of custom that I may make him S. Matthew the Evangelist. I will turn the wise things of the world into good.'

Therefore in those three ways Christ speaks to us as the One who comes gently and unostentatiously to do work and deal with the elements which lie below the surface in absolute tenderness, striving to rescue from all sides and all quarters those things which may be turned to use, with a wonderful economy, to gather up the waste things of the world and turn them to good. And in such characteristics, Evangelist and Prophet said, are to be found the very characteristics which must finally attract men.

BISHOP BOYD CARPENTER.

The Story of the Judges.

And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua. JUDGES ii. 20-23.

WE are reading just now in the Sunday First Lessons in the Book of Judges. It may have struck you as a strange sequel to the triumphant entry into the Promised Land, and even

more to the promises themselves, which had spoken not only of conquest but of rest. The book covers a space apparently of at least three hundred years; and it is a record of ever-renewed conflict, danger, hardly-won deliverance.

The history of Israel, as it is written in the Bible, is in this respect, as in so many others, an allegory of human life. It is written 'for ensamples, for our admonition.' We see in it a picture of man's waywardness, temptations, opportunities, as God's Spirit sees them, and as His providence overrules them.

I. Here is perhaps the key to some perplexities which meet us in the great social questions which now happily occupy so much of men's thoughts and energies. We dream of Utopias, of a happy state of human existence, where poverty should not exist, nor the degradation and temptations which it brings with it, nor the painful contrasts of life. It is difficult to keep at once a warm heart and a cool head; to feel as they should be felt the shame of our civilisation and the pain of innocent sufferers; to feel them as spurs to action, and to wise and temperate, and therefore fruitful, action; not to despair of humanity, and not to rebel against providence. It is here that the Bible may help us if we will. It never preaches that wrong is the result of God's laws. It is the result of human sin and selfishness, past and present. It never preaches acquiescence in wrong, or even in the miseries which follow in its train. Even if the wrong itself be long past undoing, and the punishment of it such as must be counted for and accepted as part of God's ordinance, yet it teaches us to look on the enemies of human happiness, whatever they are, as God's enemies—enemies to be met and fought in His name. It teaches us to look for His help, raising deliverers when the need is sorest. It bids us hope that even human wrong-doing and suffering may be overruled by His wisdom for ultimate good, for the discipline of the individual character, for the slow evolving from disorder of a richer and higher order.

II. Again, the parable may find its fulfilment in every smaller society. We are exposed to the two temptations—at one time to fold our hands in the presence of evil, to think and speak of it as something that must be, and that need hang no weight on our hearts —at another either to chafe at it, to despair, to feel that God has deserted us; or again, to think by some short and easy method to stay not only its present power but all opportunities and channels of its recurrence. The Israelite was taught that it was not part of God's will that the Amorite and the Philistine, powers of foulness and cruelty, should haunt and poison the sacred inheritance of God's people. It was the unfaithfulness, the half-heartedness, of himself and of his forefathers which had left the evil root in the soil from

which it should have been utterly cleared away. But he was taught also that the work which might, if men's hearts were truer, have been done once and for all, must now be done piecemeal, done from generation to generation, done perhaps again and again, but done patiently, bravely, hopefully.

III. Once more, the story of the Book of Judges is a parable of our individual lives. It is a sad thing, as life goes on, to feel that old faults, old temptations, old weaknesses, cling to us.

We dreamed of life as a land of promise which a few short sharp struggles in boyhood and youth would clear from all God's enemies, and make a scene thenceforth of peace and divinely-protected service and progress. And we find that evil had deeper root than we thought. It is more nearly part of ourselves. When defeated in one part of our life it seems to break out with fresh energy in another. The struggle is never over. It is a lesson, surely, that God means life to teach us. It is not that His hand is shortened, that He cannot save. It is not that our ideal, our dream, our hope, was untrue. It is that His purposes are wider than ours as well as that our wills are weaker than we thought. He would have us learn to the full the lesson of our own sinfulness. He is punishing us for past unfaithfulness. Life might have been easier and freer from temptation to all of us if in the first sunny hours of youth we had listened more faithfully to the voice of conscience, if we had made no compromises with evil. He is punishing us, but He is also testing, proving, training us.

DEAN WICKHAM.

God's Love the Motive in Redemption.

Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy him. S. MATTHEW xii. 14.
He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? S. JOHN xiv. 9.

I. APART from the Incarnation, the word God is only an abstraction. It is doubtful whether any but the Christian is intellectually justifiable in ascribing to God the qualities which men do so glibly. Is He good? Setting Jesus aside, the answer is at least doubtful. One can only hope so. But under the pressure of pain, and in the presence of 'Nature's immoralities,' one must doubt of it. Judging existence by what we can see of it, and without any revelation of whence it proceeds and whither it tends, one must remain doubtful of whether it is presided over by a good genius or a malevolent sprite, or whether it has any plan or purpose whatever. Nor do the observable facts of life yield up any clear answer to the question

of the endurance of a human soul. There are some things which intimate immortality, but then there are just as many and as cogent considerations which point the opposite way. Indeed, the 'God' who is constructed by human reason out of the only material available, is a being powerless to engage a human affection, or, indeed, to awaken anything but the most languid interest. In point of fact, He does not do anything more than this. Did you ever know a man who cared nothing for the person of Jesus who had any real, vivid, personal interest in God? I never did.

The truth is, that if one will take the trouble to trace up the various complex notions, which, in their combination, compose the accepted idea of God, he will find that they have proceeded from Jesus Christ. Men have looked at Him and seen the Father.

They have seen a father. This is the characteristic of the conception of God which comes from Jesus. It forms itself not around the idea of greatness, or majesty, or mystery, but love. It thinks of God as a parent who has transmitted part of his own life to his numerous offspring. These children are scattered far and wide. Some are silly babes, and some are wayward sons. They have wandered far from their father's house, and for the most part have forgotten all about him. Myriads of them are living in poverty and pain. They have used up long ago the little portion of goods which fell to each one's share when they left their father's house, and to make it good they have been for many a century plundering and overreaching one another. The weak and helpless ones are robbed, while the lusty and smart pile up heaps of treasure. From the whole mass a confused cry comes up to heaven.

II. It is to this situation that the idea of 'Salvation' addresses itself. But look closely at just what is this thing we call salvation. It is a movement, not of men toward God, but of God toward men. He comes to seek and to save. This is the element which has given such a tenacious vitality to Jesus' plan. He roots the process of salvation in the nature of God. We might do without God, but He cannot do without us. This is the fact which gave Jesus such assured confidence of ultimate success. He was working with God.

Let us open this thought a little. Why do men exist at all? What did God make them for? What is the final cause of creation? The answer is stated in the central formula of Christianity, 'I believe in God the Father; and in Jesus Christ His Son.' That is to say, God's essential nature is such that He has not remained lonely. That instinct of propagation, the most imperious of all impulses in man, is also the dominant impulse in God! He was begetting, and the Son was begotten from all eternity. But the Son is also 'the first-born among many creatures.' God will not sit solitary at the centre of an

empty universe. If He were power this might be, for the sense of power does not need to be either shared or admired in order to give satisfaction to its possessor. If He were benevolence, goodness, truth, other sentient beings would not be a necessity to Him, for all these find complete gratification in merely existing. Jesus' description of God is, that He is love. But love, by its very nature, cannot exist without an object. So, from God's necessity for companionship springs Adam, 'who was the son of God,' and all his race. The *rationale* of redemption is the same as that of creation. It is rooted in the eternal fact that God's purpose must remain unfulfilled until He brings back His children to His love. As Jesus phrases it: 'It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.' Let me call to your mind again that wonderful parable of the Prodigal Son. There are four scenes in the drama of a human soul. The first is a splendid and happy home, where an old man and his children live in peace and free interchange of affection. The second is a young man in torn and ragged silks and faded garlands, standing wistfully in a confused scene where pipers and swine, harlots and prodigals, jostle one another. The third is a venerable and sad father sitting, waiting wearily the home-coming of his child. The last is a great house, illuminated, from whose open doors and windows pours out the sound of music, feasting, and the sweet cries of love.

Salvation is God's process of bringing His children back to Himself. It must be borne in mind that we are dealing here with things which cannot be forced, not even by God Himself. The old legend which tells of Julian the Apostate lying wounded and dying in the desert, flinging up a handful of sand like a vanquished gladiator in the arena, and crying, 'O Nazarene, Thou hast conquered!' misconceives the very spirit of Christianity. God does not win, and will not have, victories thus. God is a Christian. He overcomes evil with good. His formula is, 'My son, give Me thine heart.' Anything less than this He will not have. He would win His children as the maiden is won to blissful surrender to her lover, or as the strong man is bound in the cords of love.

Why do we so confidently assert all this about God? Because we see Him in the Nazarene. By walking with the Son we come to see the Father. We find God present and rejoicing in human loves at Cana; present, grieving with human woe, at Nain; present, and pitying human weakness and sin, before the woman taken in adultery; present, and denouncing human selfishness in the Scribes and Pharisees; present, and gathering little children in His arms; weeping over human folly, as He looks from the mountain shoulder upon Jerusalem; eagerly grasping at the faintest proffer of divine love by the thief

upon the Cross; pleading in extenuation of mortal sin, that, 'they know not what they do'; passing out of sight to the Father with divine benediction on His lips; disappearing into the heavens wherein the Eternal Heart of the universe throbs in sympathy with human need.

S. D. M'CONNELL.

Ignorant Prayers.

Ye know not what ye ask. S. MARK x. 38.

YE know not what ye ask. Were those words written only of the two sons of Zebedee? Do no ignorant requests go up now from earth into the ear of Christ? I propose to consider that question, to dwell with you upon the thought of ignorant prayers, adding such words of reproof, and yet of encouragement also, as we seem to find sanctioned in the teaching of our Lord Himself.

I. And let me say first, that ignorant prayers are not always and not necessarily unthinking, inattentive, much less irreverent prayers. Of some persons indeed in every congregation it must be said, in a tone wholly of reproof and warning, Ye know not what ye ask When we see a person careless even of the external marks of reverence in worship; not standing in praise, not kneeling in prayer; taking no part in the utterances of the congregation, whether in response or hymn; or looking around him in idle observation of others when every thought should be centred in himself and in the act which he has come hither to perform, well may the words occur to us, in their gravest and saddest signification, Ye know not what ye ask. Little do you think what you are engaged in; little do you remember Him at whose footstool, in bodily presence, you are kneeling.

But the sons of Zebedee asked not in inattention or in irreverence when their request was thus answered. And thus we are led to a further application of the words; one not entirely of rebuke, but rather of correction, of instruction, and at last of encouragement.

II. There may be a prayer of ignorance which is yet a prayer of sincerity. Thus it was with the two disciples of whom the text speaks. Their request was an ignorant one; but it was made in simplicity, made in seriousness, made in love; and therefore He, the merciful Lord to whom it was addressed, did not refuse and repel, though He did inform and correct it. Let this be the encouragement of the young and of the ignorant. Do not think, we would say to them, that Jesus Christ rejects your prayers here because you do not understand everything which they contain. He looks at the heart; and if He sees you sincere and humble and earnest, using what you

know and desiring to be taught, He will lead you on in the knowledge of Himself and of His truth, until at last the words shall in your case be made good, 'Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'

III. Sometimes, again, we know not what we ask, because we mistake the character of the thing asked for; counting something good which is not good for us, or something evil which is not really evil.

These hearts of ours are all full of wishes; and it is the proper use of wishes to turn them into prayers. It is the test of a wish whether we can pray it. Sinful wishes refuse to be prayed; any wish which is not sinful should be at once moderated and consecrated by being made a prayer. But when it is made into a prayer, how often may Christ say to us concerning it, 'Ye know not what ye ask.' Perhaps you are starting in the race of life, and the one thing which seems to you important is success. Or perhaps you have been considerably hindered and thrown back in life's competition: you have known what disappointment is, you have seen others pass you, others who set out with fewer advantages and with humbler hopes than yours; and now it is becoming a critical case; if success comes not now, if you do not make a stride or take an onward step now, life itself will have been for you a failure; and who can patiently bear that result? How natural, how right, that you should pray about these things! How natural, how right, that you should say, 'Lord, if it be Thy will, give me success: Lord, if it be Thy will, save me from this blank of disappointment, from this shipwreck of my life: Lord, prosper; Lord, help; Lord, relieve me!' And yet has not Christ said, with reference to such matters, to many, in all times, of His faithful and cherished disciples, 'In asking for success, in asking for prosperity, you know not what you ask? It is in failure that you are safest, it is in disappointment that you are closest to me and nearest to heaven: these things are of love; these things are for good; be patient, be of good courage, so shall you win your crown!'

IV. But we approach still more nearly to the original application of the text when we speak of prayers offered in ignorance of the real meaning of the thing asked for, or of the processes by which alone it can be reached.

How little did the sons of Zebedee understand what was meant by sitting at the right hand and at the left hand of Christ in His glory! What a poor, carnal, earthly notion had they of the glory of which they spoke! What an ignorance is betrayed in the very words, of the spiritual blessedness for which a Christian ought to look in the world beyond death!

'Ye know not what ye ask.' The words are words of correction.

but they are not words of displeasure. Ignorant prayers are not in themselves a sin: what is a sin, and the chief of all sins, and the root of all sins, is a state of no-prayer. Are there not some before me who pray not at all? pray not even when they are here in the congregation? pray not in the family, pray not by their bedside? While this is so there can be no religion. It is not a question of progress; it is not a question of single acts of good; it is not a question of charitable or not charitable; it is scarcely a question yet of communicants or non-communicants; it is a more elementary question still: it is a question of saved or lost, a question of hope or despair, a question of heaven or hell. 'Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near.' The time is short; upon some who hear me the gate of life is closing, upon some who hear me the eternal day is dawning. Let not all be in vain. Let not prayers and sacraments, means of grace and hopes of glory, the Word of Christ and the Spirit of Christ—all have been offered to you, pressed upon you, all but forced upon you—that they cannot be —in vain. Let this day witness in the case of some one long asleep, long dead in sin, that blessed sight, a sight which is joy in heaven.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Gideon.

The sword of the Lord and of Gideon. JUDGES vii. 18.

FEW things are more remarkable than the inspiring power, whether for good or evil, which a short, pithy, pregnant saying possesses for the mind. Proverbs, watchwords, party cries, have always played an important part in human affairs, and leaders of men have ever recognised their value as powerful instruments for swaying and controlling masses of people.

Unfortunately, however, their abuse is to the full as common as their use, and in the world, whether of art, science, theology, or (more than all else) of politics, they are employed as frequently to conceal thought as to interpret it. Every politician knows that for electioneering purposes a good catchword or phrase is of more importance than a sound policy, and that, in the battle of the polls, a doubtful cause with a plausible motto will be likely to beat a cause which is sound, but nameless or awkwardly named.

For a similar reason the greatest generals of history have ever acknowledged the wisdom of putting into the mouths of their soldiers or sailors some ringing war-cry by which courage may be kindled, and

flagging energies rallied, and crises of fortune turned to victory. Many of the greatest battles of the world have been won by the inspiring power of a single noble word or sentence, which has had for the ears of the conquerors an intense meaning and force.

No Spartan of old fought tamely who had received from wife or mother that parting mandate, 'Return either with your shield or upon it!'

No Crusader in the ranks of Richard the Lion-hearted, as they charged against the hosts of Saladin, could have heard unthrilled that glorious watchword, 'Remember the Holy City!'

'God defend the right!' was the suppliant cry of youthful enthusiasm that rang out from the lips of the Black Prince at Cressy.

'S. George for England!' was the cheer with which the whole fleet saluted the flagship of Howard of Effingham, in an hour when the heart of England stood still.

'Victory or Westminster Abbey!' shouted Nelson as he boarded the great 'San Josef' in Sir John Jervis's engagement with the Spanish fleet off Cape S. Vincent; and in less than eight years afterwards he had signalled along the line at Trafalgar that never-to-be-forgotten message, 'England expects that every man will do his duty!'

All these watchwords had their meaning, their deep and inspiring meaning, at the time they were uttered, but none ever meant more, ever suggested a mightier truth, than that oldest battle-cry we know of, 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!'

I. Trust in God and implicit faith in and dependence upon His wisdom, power, and love, was the central truth, the central duty, inculcated throughout the divine education of the chosen race. The tendency of the world, then as now, was to trust in itself, in its own wisdom and power, and ignore the Almighty Father of all. It is not that God resents all manifestations in us of what is called the spirit of independence, but that He will not have us independent of Him. To live independently of God is to ignore His will; to live selfishly, and in accordance with the dictates of our own undisciplined lusts and desires; to conform ourselves to the maxims and customs of the world rather than to that Righteous Law which governs the universe. On the other hand, to live a life of dependence upon God means that we acknowledge Him in all our ways; that we obey the call of duty at all costs; that we think rather of others than of ourselves; that we conform our own wills to His, who knows what is best for us.

Trust in God lies at the foundation of all true character; for it is that which 'can alone,' to use Martineau's fine words, 'render absolute

the rules of righteousness,' and 'save them from the gnawing corrosion of exceptions, and raise them from flexible convictions of men into a law secured on the eternal holiness.' 'Intellectual integrity,' adds the same writer, 'moral tenacity, spiritual elevation, all alike involve, in their higher degrees, an unconditional trust in the everlasting sway of divine justice, wisdom, and love.'

II. We now pass on to notice the method by which Gideon was bidden to reduce the number of his army. It was simple and natural enough.

First of all the cowards were to be weeded out. 'Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead.' 'And there returned of the people twenty-and-two thousand.' It is somewhat surprising that so large a number should have availed themselves of the permission to return home, and it leads one to suspect that there must have been some plausible excuse, or excuses, ready to hand. 'A coward,' says the old proverb, 'pretends to be cautious,' and the probability is that none of these men allowed they were cowards, but discovered various satisfactory reasons for their conduct. One, doubtless, had a duty to perform by his wife and family in shirking the impending danger—for their sakes he must not risk his life; another, perchance, bethought himself of the exceeding sinfulness of war, and dreaded the thought of having a brother's blood upon his conscience; while a third may have pleaded a sudden attack of indisposition which would confine him to his tent until the fighting was over. Be this as it may, Gideon showed his wisdom in obeying God's injunction to get rid of such people. The world is always full of them. They flock round the beginning of a popular enterprise with enthusiasm, but they drop off quickly as soon as any demand is made upon their time or their energy, their money, or their ease and comfort. My experience as a London clergyman tempts me to fancy that such people exist in most parishes in the proportion of at least two to one. There is no exaggeration in the statement (so far as practical experience teaches one) that twenty-two thousand out of thirty-two thousand drew back as soon as a decent opportunity offered.

Our blessed Lord condemned that spirit in the most uncompromising terms when He lived amongst men. He taught that 'whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but that whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it' unto life eternal. In other words, if we set about the duties of life with the thought of self uppermost, we must needs fail miserably. In every walk of life the man who succeeds is he who loses the thought of self in the love of his work. God summons each one of us even as Gideon summoned the men of Israel, and verily the most terrible curse that can fall

upon us is, that when we make excuses He should take us at our word.

But Gideon's selection was not yet completed. Though ten thousand warriors only were left to face the hosts of Midian, a second test was imposed.

'The Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there; and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou place by himself: likewise every one that boweth down on his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go, every man unto his place.'

The significance of this test should be at once apparent. Only three hundred men out of the ten thousand were sufficiently self-disciplined to drink sparingly. In so hot a climate, and with such a stupendous task immediately before them, immoderate drinking must have proved fatal to their chances of success; nevertheless nine thousand seven hundred at once gave way to the impulse of the moment, and, falling down on their hands and knees, they slaked their thirst to their hearts' content. It was a trifling matter, truly, in itself, but it constituted an important test, and showed Gideon the kind of men with whom he had to deal.

III. I must now pass on, in conclusion, to say a few words about the battle itself.

Gideon, we read, took his little band of three hundred men, and 'divided it into three companies,' and he put 'a trumpet in every man's hand, together with an empty pitcher, and a lamp within the pitcher,' and they compassed the camp of the Midianites that night. And he said unto them, 'When I blow with a trumpet, I and those that are with me, then blow ye every man his trumpet also, on every side of the camp, and shout, saying, The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.' These orders were obeyed to the letter. The three hundred men stationed themselves in the darkness round the Midianite camp with their dark lanterns and trumpets; and then at the given signal they blew with the trumpets and cast away the pitchers that veiled their lamps, so that trumpet-blasts were heard and torch-lights were seen on all sides. The Midianites, roused hastily from

their sleep, were smitten with panic. Each man suspected his neighbour in the darkness for a foe, and so, without a single blow from the Israelites, they fell upon one another and slew one another, and a terrible rout and carnage ensued.

This, then, is the story of Gideon, and the lesson it teaches us is one we are slow to learn, viz., that each one of us must be prepared to fight life's battle with such weapons as God has given him.

Those three hundred men in Gideon's little band did not complain that they had neither sword, nor spear, nor shield. They made the best of what they had, and committed themselves to the guidance of a wise and protecting God. He knew that they must conquer that mighty host (if they were to conquer it at all) not by their own unaided strength, but by His wise generalship. It was for them a bloodless victory. The battle was won, not by their own skill in fighting, but by their obedience to Jehovah, and their implicit trust in Him. 'By faith' they conquered, 'as seeing Him who is invisible,' and their victory will remain for all time a parable to successive generations of men.

H. E. J. BEVAN.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Brotherhood: *My Brethren.* S. MATT. xxviii. HEBREWS ii. 12.

A DESIGNATION dating from the Resurrection. For the disciples it indicates something great and most consolatory. Joseph a type of this (Gen. xiv. 4).

Jesus first named them disciples, then friends, then little children; now brethren.

Brotherhood and Christ.

THE name of Jesus Christ, has it not been in every age the watchword of self-conceit and bigotry, excommunication and persecution?

Yes; men have separated from each other, slandered each other, murdered each other in that Name, and blasphemed it by that very act. But when did they unite in any name but that? Look all history through, from the early churches, unconscious and infantile ideas of God's kingdom, as Eden was of the human race, when love alone was law, and none said that aught that he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. Whose name was the bond of unity for that brotherhood such as the earth had never seen, when the Roman lady and the negro slave partook together at the table of the same bread and wine, and sat together at the feet of the Syrian tent-maker? 'One is our Master, even Christ, who sits at the right

hand of God; and in Him we are all brothers.' . . . Look, too, at the first followers of S. Bennet and S. Francis, at the Cameronians, or the little persecuted flock around Wesley. Look, too, at the great societies of our own days, which, however imperfectly, still lovingly and earnestly do their measure of God's work at home and abroad. And say, when was there ever real union, co-operation, philanthropy, equality, brotherhood, among men save in loyalty to Him —Jesus, who died upon the Cross?

Brotherhood of Christians.

I HOLD that no one is a child of God merely because he belongs to this or that religion [Christian confession]; to him who receives Jesus Christ power will be given to become a son of God. In Christ Jesus nothing avails save faith which works by love. He in whom I find this faith is my brother. Is he of another religion? that makes no difference; he is still my brother, and nearer to me than my fellow-professors who have no faith. Indeed, because he is of another religion, in which the gospel does not shine so brightly, he is to me a miracle of grace.

Brotherhood and the Church.

WHEN a Christian entered a foreign city, his first inquiry was for the Church (the brotherhood), and here he was received as a brother, and supplied with whatever could contribute to his spiritual or bodily refreshment.

Brotherhood. Brotherly Love.

Mutual brotherly love the distinctive mark of Christians. 'The heathen were wont to exclaim with astonishment: "Behold how these Christians love one another, and how they are ready to die for one another."' 'They love each other before knowing each other.' Lucian sneeringly remarks: 'Their Lawgiver has persuaded them that they are all brethren.'

Brotherhood and Religion.

WHEN Abraham sat at his tent-door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man, stooping and leaning upon his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, and who was a hundred years old. He received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man ate and prayed not, nor begged a blessing on his meat, asked him why he did not worship the God of the Hebrews?

The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other God; at which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night and an unguarded position. When the old man was gone, God called to him and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, 'I thrust him away because he did not

worship Thee.' God answered, 'I have suffered him these hundred years, though he dishonoured Me; and couldest thou not endure him for one night, when he gave thee no trouble?'

Upon this, saith the story, Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction. Go thou and do likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham.

'Love your enemies; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'

Brotherhood and French Revolution.

One hastily flings down his coat, waistcoat, and two watches, and is rushing to the work (wheelbarrowing). 'But your watches?' cried the general voice. 'Does one distrust his brothers?' answers he. Nor were his watches stolen.

Excuses.

I find a common objection in the mouths of the ungodly: they say, We can do nothing without God. . . . If He have not predestinated us, and will not turn us, how can we turn ourselves, or be saved? Thus they think they are excused.

I answer: 1. Though you cannot cure yourselves, you can hurt and poison yourselves. Will you wilfully do that? 2. Though you cannot be converted without the special grace of God, yet know that God giveth His grace in the use of His holy means which He hath appointed to that end.

Are you not able to make use of them?

You cannot say that you have done what you are able. 3. You can therefore forfeit the grace and help of God by wilful sinning or negligence, though you cannot without grace turn to God. 4. And for God's decrees, know that they separate not the end from the means, but tie them together. God never decreed to save any but the sanctified, nor to condemn any but the unsanctified. God doth as truly decree from everlasting whether your land this year shall be barren or fruitful, and just how long you shall live in the world, as He hath decreed whether you shall be saved or not. And yet you would think that man but a fool that would forbear ploughing and sowing, and say, If God have decreed that my ground shall bear corn, it will bear whether I plough and sow or not. If God have decreed that I shall live, I shall live whether I eat or not; but if He have not, it is not eating that will keep me alive. If you know how to answer such a man you know too how to answer yourselves, for the case is alike. If you do not, then try these conclusions upon your bodies before you venture to try them on your souls. See first whether God

will keep you alive without food and raiment, and give you corn without tillage and labour; and whether He will bring you to your journey's end without travel or carriage; and if you speed well in this, then try whether He can bring you to heaven without your diligent use of means.

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